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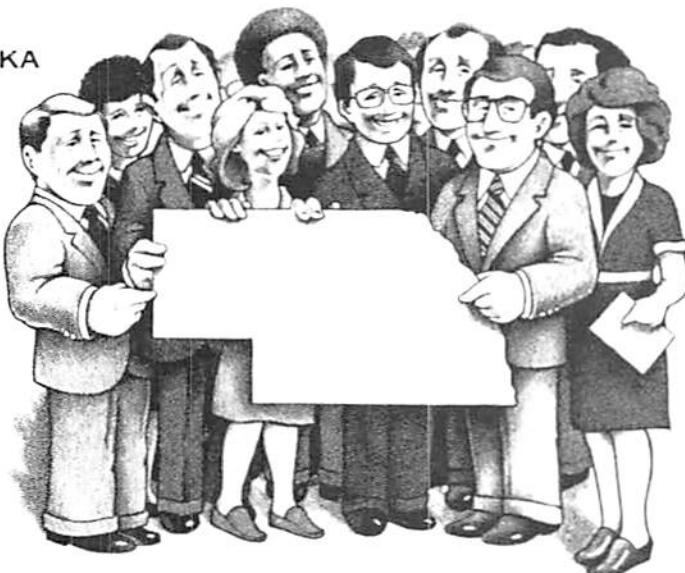


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CONTENTS

Huskers Illustrated

Features

6 Recruiting Review — The Huskers struck it rich in recruiting gold mines.

14 Spring Outlook — Nebraska has questions to answer.

18 Hit And Run — Huskers setting sights on baseball title.

21 NFL Draft Preview — A look at what the pros think.

26 Cage Recruiting — A pair of football states boast rare basketball talent.

29 NU Gymnastics — Huskers have created a dynasty.

38 National Recruiting — Did the rich get richer?

44 FCA Conferences — Athletes have fruitful summer ahead.

45 On The Move — Fehrs has wrestlers on the way up.

49 Devaney Says... — Excerpts from the book of NU Hall of Famer.

52 The All-Stars — Husker seniors tour the nation.

54 Joe Staub — Track standout flexing his muscles.

56 Super Huskers — Harper and Horn played in the big one.

58 Husker Awards — Mark Mauer, others honored.

Departments

32 Photospread

34 Letters

48 Potpourri

62 Opinion

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on the cover

Husker legends and Husker hopefuls rubbed elbows during the Big Eight championship banquet. Twenty-eight Nebraska recruits, the largest weekend group of visitors in Nebraska recruiting history, were on hand to toast the champs. Johnny Rodgers, the 1972 Heisman Trophy winner, and classmate Rich Glover, the Outland and Lombardi Trophies winner, flew in to lend a hand and give the recruits a close-up look at NU gridiron tradition. Rodgers, left, and Glover flank Head Coach Tom Osborne and the championship trophy. Recruit Bob Bowen, a tight end from Omaha Westside, next to Glover, and cornerback Kevin Biggers, a transfer from Mount San Antonio (Calif.) Junior College, move close, hoping such winning ways will rub off. (Photo by Randy Hampton)

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Barometers On Upswing For '82 Recruiting Class

But Osborne hedges "best ever" claim until paper greats put on pads.

By Tom Ash

Looking for barometers for figuring the strength and potential of Nebraska's Football Recruiting Class of '82?

How about the ease with which Coach Tom Osborne shrugged off rejection by a superduper running back from Texas. Osborne took the news without blinking. That should tell you something.

Of course, the Cornhuskers wanted Anthony Byerly of Newton, Tex. They chased Texas U. to the wire for his allegiance. He was the most glamorized prep runner ever to come so close to enrolling in Lincoln. The press made a big deal of the tug-of-war.

The Huskers dangled scholarship No. 29 for Byerly for five days after the rest of the class was enlisted on national signing day.

When he got the word, Osborne

simply closed the book on an exhausting recruiting season. Between the Orange Bowl game and Feb. 9, the day before the deadline, he had visited the homes of 90 to 95 players, including 25 of the 28 future Huskers. Without Byerly, at least he wouldn't have to worry about scrounging up another scholarship as a walkon reward.

Besides, running backs were down the priority list. Without looking forward to proven stars Roger Craig and



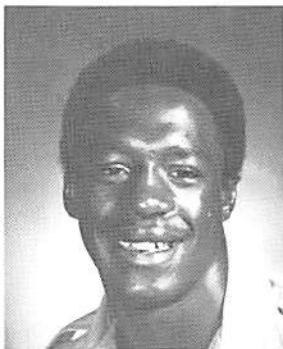
Bob Thornton Moves Up

One of the positive aspects of Recruiting Coordinator Jerry Petibone's departure for Texas A&M at the height of the recruiting campaign was the elevation to full-time status of Husker Assistant Coach Bob Thornton.

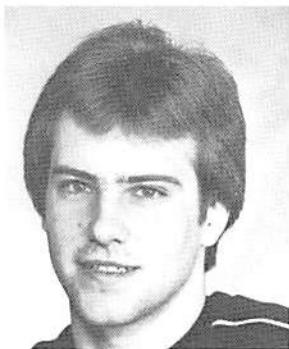
The sudden opening allowed Head Coach Tom Osborne to add Thornton's name to the roster of eight allowable assistants. Thornton, who joined the staff as secondary coach last year, was listed as a part-time coach while serving as a regional director of alumni activities for the Alumni Association.

Thornton was a safety in a Husker secondary that led the nation in pass defense in 1973. After coaching at Nebraska Wesleyan, Nebraska, Army and Western Illinois, he returned to Nebraska to coach a nation-leading pass defense in his first try.

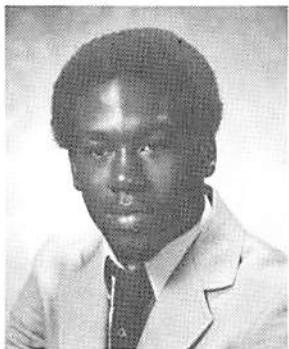
"He's been doing a full-time job," Osborne said. "It's not right to have the nation's top pass defense coached by a part-timer."



Pernell Gatson



Don Douglas



Doug Dubose



Thurman Hoskins

Mike Rozier and star-in-waiting Jeff Smith at I-back for one, two and three years, respectively. "It would have hurt more," Osborne said.

Nebraska had already uncovered well-hidden potential backfield jewels in Missouri and Nevada, and when, with a week to go, a versatile Connecticut runner, who was recruited hard in the east, made his promise, Jack Pierce who directed the in-house recruiting operation, let out a whoop. "That's it. Anything else is gravy," Pierce said.

Losing Byerly did nothing to dull enthusiasm over the other 28 signatures. "This *could* be the best recruiting class we've ever had. On paper," said Osborne.

Which is as close as he is likely ever to come to a sweeping endorsement.

"Some years, our best players were walkons, like Jimmy and Toby Williams. If we have a couple like that, it could be a great year," he said.

There were other indicators that the Class of '82 was something special. Never before had so many first choices

fallen into line so quickly. Six days before signing day, the commitments jumped from 17 or 18 to 26. Osborne had targeted for 24 or 25. "We had to call several outstanding players and tell them we were full," he said.

Nebraska went 11x12 with an unusually rich home-state crop. Defensive Line Coach Charlie McBride won a gold star by landing six players from an atypically fertile Kansas City area.

"It was just one of those years. They say there were more prospects there than in the last 20 years. I just had to drop St. Louis and concentrate on the top kids around Kansas City," McBride said.

In an age of specialization, Osborne said, college recruiting is more closely resembling the pro draft. Instead of recruiting athletes and fitting them to positions, the emphasis is on filling position needs two or three years hence.

Nebraska's top needs were in the lines, since only one on offense and three on defense were signed last year; quarterback, since none were recruited

last year; tight end and secondary.

The new crop included 10 linemen, the top quarterbacks in Nebraska and Montana, three tight ends and five defensive backs, including transfer Kevin Biggers from Mount San Antonio, Calif., Junior College, who enrolled in January.

"We have our needs covered as well as we have in a long time. The ones I saw are all outstanding players," said Backfield Coach Mike Corgan, a survivor of 21 Nebraska recruiting campaigns.

"Excellent," was Line Coach Milt Tenopir's summation.

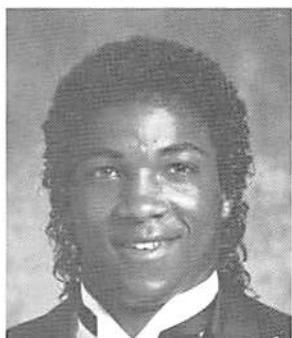
"This could be one of the really premier bunches. With their height and weight, these kids are about big enough to play when they get here," Line Coach Clete Fischer said.

"It's the best class since I've been here. Most of the linemen can play both ways," McBride said.

The Class of '82 included two pairs of high school teammates — lineman Robbie Maggard and defensive back



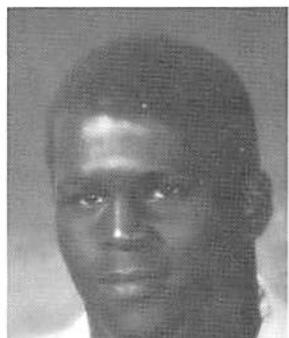
Dan Casterine



Albert Lewis



Bob Bowen



Stan Parker



Joe Augustyne



Andre Lambert



Todd Olson



Rob Maggard

Recruits

Charlie Cartwright of Olathe, Kan., and running back Albert Lewis and split end Andre Lambert of Las Vegas. The Nevadans attended the Huskers' summer football camp.

In Nebraska, all-state linebacker Chad Daffer of Nebraska City and guard-linebacker Todd Olson of Grand Island Northwest, were from the Class B ranks, and defensive back Jeff Tomjack was from Class C-2 Ewing.

Nebraska's recruiter's also gambled on some damaged goods.

Bellevue West linebacker Tony Holloway, an all-stater, was signed despite missing his last four games following knee surgery. Lewis was a 4.5 flyer before knee surgery three games into his senior season. Norfolk lineman Mike Hoefer underwent knee surgery in January.

The recruiting season was not without hitches. Three weeks from the

end, Recruiting Coordinator Jerry Pettibone suddenly defected to Texas A&M. Secondary Coach Bob Thornton, formerly a part-time assistant, was put on fulltime and rushed into Pettibone's primary area, Texas. The Huskers were skunked in Texas.

"It was a difficult transition. We probably lost two to four players in his area," Osborne said. "But the overall impact wasn't totally negative. There were a lot of positive things Jerry initiated."

Tackle Phil Rogers of Tucson, Ariz., a Pettibone recruit, followed through with the Huskers after Pettibone called him from College Station. "He talked to me for 15 minutes. He said Nebraska was the best place I could go. That was class," Rogers said.

Perhaps Pettibone's most positive legacy was the Big Eight championship banquet in January, his pet project. Pettibone wanted to do it up right with Husker legends Johnny Rodgers and Rich Glover as speakers, a mass

awards ceremony and video taped season highlights on four big screens.

Glover's emotional profession of his love for Nebraska had particular appeal. Of the 28 recruits on hand, the largest group of weekend visitors in school history, 13 signed.

"It was hard for me to decide between Nebraska and Iowa," said Minnesota all-state lineman Lawrence Hart. "That banquet was a very large part of my decision. When Rich Glover started choking up, I cried with him. It tore me up to see how much love he had for Nebraska."

Doug Dubose, the Connecticut back, said, "When Rich Glover broke down, that got to me. I figured if a guy could still love a place like that after he's been gone 10 years, I'd love it, too."

Kevin Blackmer, another Minnesota lineman, said, "I couldn't believe all those people turned out on a night like that. It was really enthusiastic. When they showed the highlight films, the people cheered for a completed pass, even if it wasn't a touchdown. That impressed me."

"I wouldn't go so far as to call it the greatest year in history," Osborne said during a signing-day press conference. He was relaxed and cracked jokes with reporters after releasing the list of 28 names.

Another barometer: "I haven't seen Tom so loose in a long time. It must have been a heck of a year," said Sports Information Director Don Bryant.

A closer look at the Class of '82 by position:

Quarterbacks

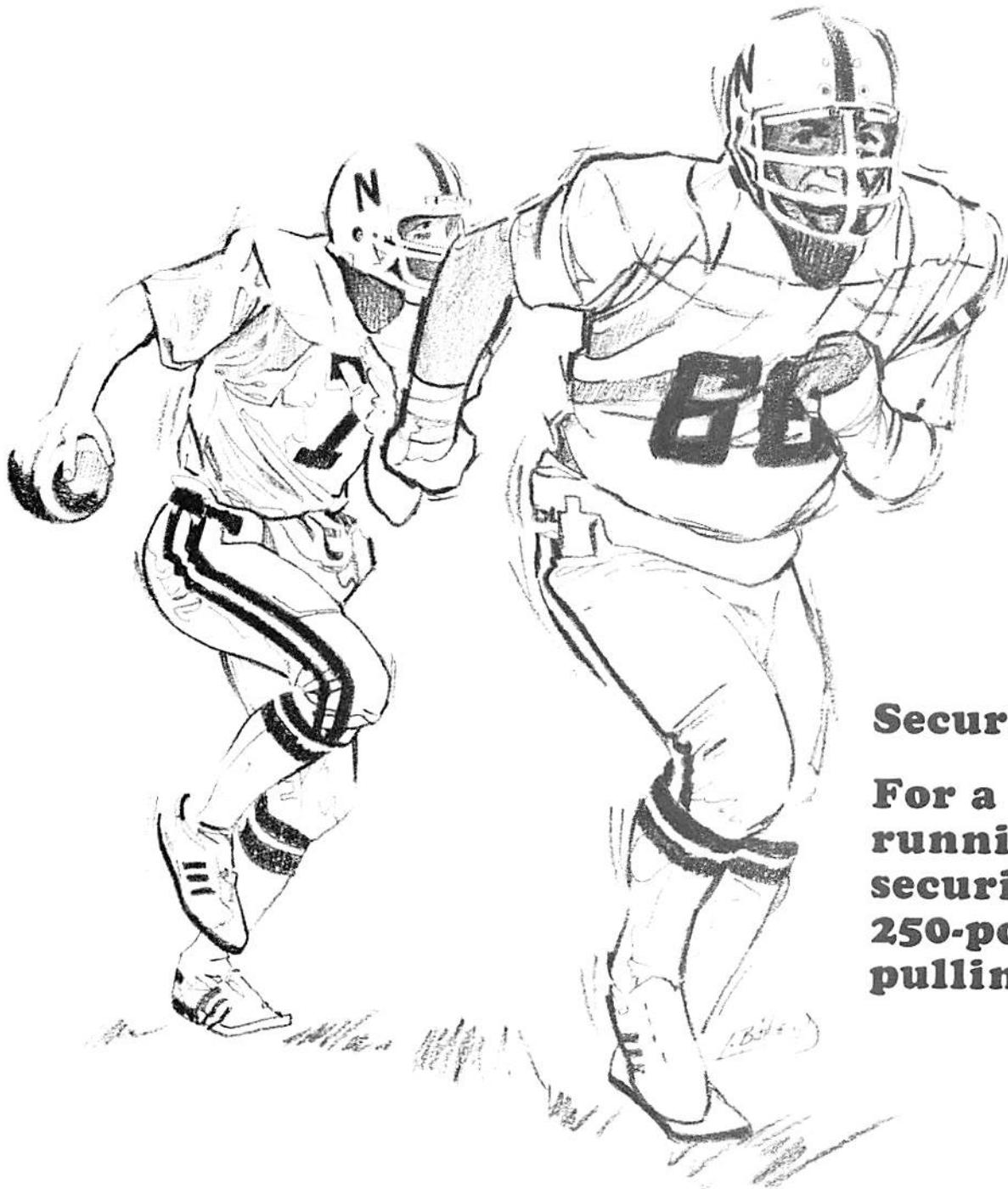
Clete Fischer has "watched Omaha football for 20-some years, and Pernell

Nebraska Prep Recruits

Name, School

Bob Bowen, Omaha Westside
Todd Carpenter, Grand Island
Chad Daffer, Nebraska City
Pernell Gatson, Omaha Central
Mike Hoefer, Norfolk
Tony Holloway, Bellevue East
Brad Johnson, Ralston
Todd Olson, Grand Island, NW
Stan Parker, Bellevue East
Bryan Siebler, Fremont
Jeff Tomjack, Ewing

Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	
TE/DE	6-3	225	4.7
OL/DL	6-5	230	5.1
LB	6-1	210	4.8
QB	5-10	170	4.6
QT/DE	6-6	205	4.85
LB/DE	6-2	185	4.7
OT	6-3	242	5.2
OL/LB	6-2	235	4.8
TE/DE	6-4	245	4.9
WB/DB	6-0	175	4.55
DB	6-1	185	4.7



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Chris Spachman



Kevin Blackmer



Lawrence Hart, Jr.



Brad Johnson

Recruits

Pernell Gatson is the most exciting kid I've seen besides Johnny Rodgers, no question. He can do everything with the football. You go to scout a game, and you find out Gatson is the only guy you're watching. He makes things happen."

The Omaha Central all-stater averaged 7.2 yards per carry and 193 yards in total offense per game. He rushed for 826 yards and passed for 912. He passed for four touchdowns against Lincoln Northeast and ran for three against Omaha Burke.

Gatson took a late recruiting trip to Houston but decided to stay close to home, he said, "because if things didn't go well down there, how many people would still be behind me. I'd be just another out-of-stater."

Gatson "has great running ability," Osborne said, "but he was in our football school, so I know he can throw the ball, too. The thing we're trying to get away from is having a quarterback who can't run."

Don Douglas of Butte, Mont., also fills the requirements. He rushed for 625 yards and passed for 808. He had eight touchdowns each running and throwing while leading Butte High to a 10-1 record and the state Class AA

championship.

Douglas was voted the most valuable player in the state by the coaches. In the championship game against Great Falls C. M. Russell High, which had beaten Butte earlier, Douglas accounted for both touchdowns with a 37-yard run and 16-yard pass in a 14-6 triumph.

"One of his greatest attributes was his leadership," said Butte Coach John McElroy. "We weren't going to play him against Anaconda because of a pulled groin muscle. That's a crucial rivalry for us. It was 0-0 late in the game, and our other two quarterbacks hadn't been able to do anything. We put him in, and he drove us 67 yards to the winning TD."

Douglas will have an edge in the Nebraska offensive system since former Husker aide Guy Ingles helped Butte install a similar offense.

Out-of-State Recruits

Joe Augustyne, Emporia, Ks.
Kevin Blackmer, Minneapolis, Mn.
Charlie Cartwright, Olathe, Ks.
Dan Casterine, Evergreen, Co.
Don Douglas, Butte, Mont.
Jimmy Drayton, Elizabeth, N.J.
Doug Dubose, Uncasville, Conn.
Lawrence Hart, Cottage Grove, Mn.
Thurman Hoskins, Turney, Mo.
Andre Lambert, Las Vegas, Nv.
Albert Lewis, Las Vegas, Nv.
Rob Maggard, Olathe, Ks.
Philip Rogers, Tucson, Az.
Chris Spachman, Kansas City, Ks.
Brad Tyrer, Kansas City, Mo.
Tom Welter, Yankton, S.D.

	TE/DE	6-3	212	4.65
OL/DL	6-5	223	4.9	
DB	5-11	185	4.6	
FB/DB	6-0	200	4.5	
QB	6-2	190	4.6	
DB	6-1	190	4.5	
IB/WB	5-11	185	4.5	
OT/DT	6-5	235	4.9	
RB	6-0	198	4.6	
SE	5-7	160	4.5	
IB/FB	6-2	205	4.5	
OL/DL	6-3	242	5.1	
OL/DL	6-3	235	4.8	
DL	6-4	245	4.7	
DE	6-3	200	4.75	
OL/DL	6-6	230	4.8	

Junior College Transfer

Kevin Biggers, Mt. San Antonio, Ca.

DB	6-0	180	4.4
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Running Backs

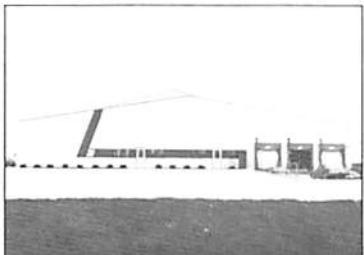
Another barometer: A few years ago, I-back Rick Berns set a Nebraska football record with a vertical jump of 36 inches, which was considered phenomenal at the time. Current Husker cornerback Allen Lyday broke the record by hitting 37 inches last year.

Doug Dubose, a halfback from Uncasville, Conn., who prepped at nearby Montville, has logged a 38-inch vertical jump. **Thurman Hoskins** of tiny Turney, Mo., who played for Lathrop High, has hit 37 inches.

Dubose is 5-11; Hoskins is 6-0. Both are centers on their basketball teams, which have regulars six inches taller. Dubose can stuff a basketball with both hands after one step. Hoskins "looks like David Thompson

Lincoln, Nebraska.

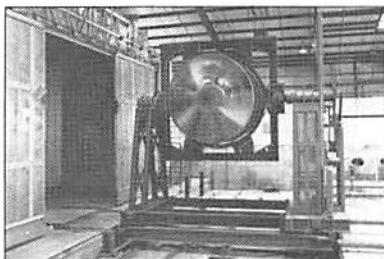
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Todd Carpenter



Mike Hoefer



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Recruits

(Denver Nuggets) on a basketball floor," McBride said.

Dubose visited Syracuse and canceled trips to Penn State, Pitt and North Carolina after seeing Nebraska. He gained 1,702 yards and scored 25 touchdowns for the state runner-up team. He had 291 yards in one game and 275 on 13 carries in another with an 84-yard run called back.

In a 37-30 championship loss to New Haven St. Joseph, Dubose ran for 140 yards and caught two touchdown passes. He will get an initial trial at wingback, but may end up at I-back.

Craig and Rozier, who were instrumental in recruiting Dubose, watched films of the championship one afternoon in the football offices and were excited by what they saw. "He's cold-blooded," Craig said. "Did you see that move? He's got balance. He can play," Rozier said.

"Roger and Mike helped me see Nebraska was the place to come to get recognition and an education," Dubose said. "They were really warm. They're best friends, and they're trying to beat each other out. That shows me how close that team must be."

Hoskins missed three games with an injury and still gained 1,200 yards and led Missouri scorers with 28 touchdowns. But he was largely unheralded because of the small stature of his school.

Some of his relatives had been great athletes at small colleges in the St. Joseph area, "and some of the small schools were trying to hide him,"

McBride said. Hoskins has no phone. Missouri discovered Hoskins, and a Kansas City coach tipped off McBride because, the coach said, he had been so well treated when he brought his seniors to Lincoln to watch spring practice last year.

McBride was convinced after watching films. "He's just a dominant force," Hoskins' coach, Harold Brown said.

"Thurman has a great attitude," McBride said. "He told Coach Osborne, 'You're going to like me. When I get up there, I'll show you.' He could be a fullback. He'll play anywhere you ask him. He'll knock your head off as a linebacker."

Dan Casterline, a 200-pounder with 4.5 speed from Evergreen, Col., is projected as a fullback or strong safety after averaging 8.1 yards per carry and being named the outstanding back in the Jefferson County League. He played wingback as a sophomore.

"He's a very intense player and a 3.5 student," Tenopir said. "He canceled visits to Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma State after visiting us. He wasn't going to string anybody along."

Al Lewis, a 205-pounder with a 4.5 speed, gained 240 yards in his first two games and 70 the first half of his third for Las Vegas Western last year before his knee went.

"He was the most outstanding running back prospect in the state. He would have led the state in rushing if he hadn't been hurt," said Western Coach Horace Smith.

Smith coached NFL rookies Robin Sendlein (Vikings) and Frank Hawkins (Raiders), "so I think I know talent. This guy can play," he said.

Tight End

A high-priority need was filled by the top two tight ends in Nebraska and a Kansas all-stater who started out in Nebraska.

Bob Bowen of Omaha Westside was named to the all-state teams after catching 20 passes for 400 yards and three touchdowns. He also averaged 41 yards as a punter.

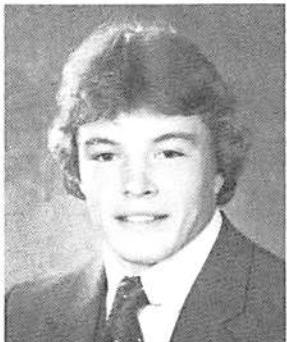
"Just look at his height (6-3), weight (225) and speed (4.7) and the fact that he played for a coach like Dan Young, and he has to be a player," said Pierce, who coordinated the recruiting. "He's a mixture of the good kids we've had here. He catches the ball like Junior Miller, and he's a good blocker like Jeff Finn and Steve Davies."

Stan Parker of Bellevue East is more imposing physically at 6-4 and 250, but he wasn't even All-Metro, partly because of the presence of Bowen.

"I know what I can do. It shows what I can do on film. The people who pick those teams go by stats. Bowen had better stats. They threw to me eight times," Parker said. He collected 112 yards and three touchdowns.

Parker, also a possible defensive end at Nebraska, played defensive tackle and end, "so I didn't get a chance to establish myself at one position" on the star teams, he said.

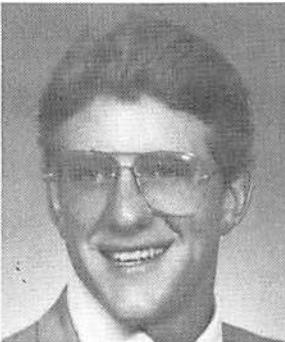
But his raw talent, his reputation as an all-star wrestler and his No. 3 ranking (196-2) on Nebraska's all-time discus chart drew enough interest to warrant visits to UCLA, Louisiana State and Iowa State.



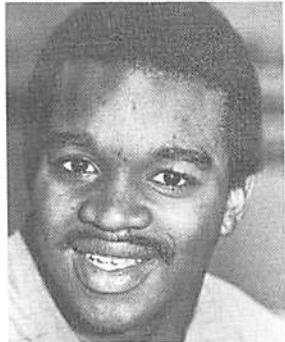
Chad Daffer



Tony Holloway



Brad Tyrer



Kevin Biggers

Joe Augustyn of Emporia, Kan., High was the all-state tight end on a Class 5A runner-up team. He caught 28 passes for 518 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Augustyn was a sophomore starter at Grand Island Northwest before moving. He visited Colorado, "but I knew as soon as I visited Nebraska it was going to be Big Red," he said.

"Joe's a sprinter and throws the shot and discus in track and plays center on the basketball team. That's a pretty good combination," McBride said.

Split End

"We're a little thin at receivers," Osborne said. "Short, too."

Andre Lambert of Las Vegas Western, the lone split end recruit, "is a short 5-8 and about 170," Coach Horace Smith said. "He wasn't recruited much because of his size, but he can fly (4.5)."

"He played four years for us and started for two years at wingback. We

were mostly a running team. We ran the Nebraska offense, so he didn't get a chance to catch the ball that much."

Linemen

Four of the 10-man line bonanza were home-bred, including two from Grand Island. Players regarded as top of the line in Minnesota and Kansas also came in pairs.

There was little doubt where **Todd Olson** of Grand Island Northwest was headed. He was an all-state guard and doubled as a linebacker. Olson prefers linebacker, but his heritage is in the line.

Olson's father, Don, was a Cornhusker All-Big Eight tackle in 1959 and bypassed his senior year to sign with the Denver Broncos.

"He'd get a little hostile if I didn't go to Nebraska," young Ole said. "When I was a little kid and I didn't listen to Nebraska games on the radio, I could tell when my dad walked in the door from work whether Nebraska had won, just by the look on his face.

That rubs off."

Robbie Maggard of Olathe, Kan., North was recruited by Notre Dame, Kansas and Colorado, but McBride had something going for him. When he visited Maggard's home, Rob's father pulled out a seventh-grade picture of his son wearing a Nebraska jersey and hat. Score another one for Glover. The elder Maggard was a Glover fan.

The younger Maggard also wore a Nebraska shirt under his pads last fall. He was a baseball pitcher, basketball star and 3.8 student.

Maggard and **Chris Spachman** of Bishop Miege High in K.C., Kan., were featured on the state's Top 11 team by a Kansas newspaper.

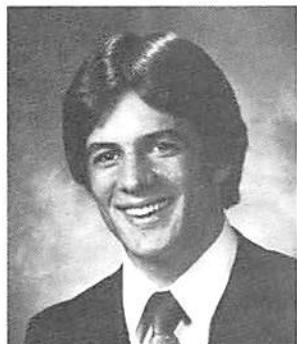
His coach, Bob Tavernaro, called Spachman the "top lineman in the country because of his speed (4.7)." Tavernaro has been a steady supplier of Big Eight talent, so his judgment is sound.

"He's grown so fast, 6-4, 245, his parents thought he was going to be a basketball player," McBride said.

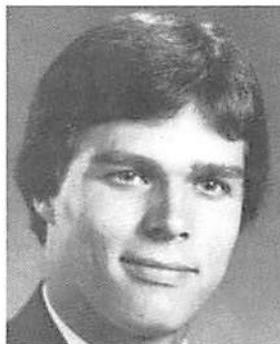
CONTINUED ON 60



Jimmy Drayton



Jeff Tomjack



Bryan Siebler



Charlie Cartwright



Huskers getting bigger and better as they work in the nation's top weight room.

Spring Practice Brings Questions

Quarterback and secondary picture needs to clear up in 20 days of workouts.

When the remnants of the Big Eight championship football team reconvenes for spring practice March 29, they will be faced with major patchwork in the defensive secondary. Minor jobs will be required in the offensive backfield and both lines.

Quarterback could be a major sweat or a cool breeze, depending on the dictates of Coach Almighty.

"If Turner and Nate are fully recovered by fall, we'll be in better shape than most years," Coach Tom Osborne said. Turner and Nate, as most Cornhusker followers are aware, are Gill and Mason, respectively. Both started at quarterback before being felled by injuries last fall. "They figure to be at the top of the heap if they're healthy," Osborne said.

Elsewhere, the Huskers must develop replacements for secondary regulars Ric Lindquist, Sammy Sims, Rodney Lewis and Jeff Krejci, who were instrumental in a pass defense that led the nation. Holes up front on defense were left by the departure of All-American end Jimmy Williams and tackle Henry Waechter.

On offense, fullback Phil Bates, wingback Anthony Steels and linemen Dan Hurley and Tom Carlstrom are gone from the starting lineup.

The pluses, however, are unusually numerous, starting with an offense that was tops in the Big Eight and fifth in the nation.

Dave Rimington, the Outland Trophy winner who starts it all with his center snaps, is back in the fold after dismissing thoughts of turning pro. All-Big Eight runners Mike Rozier and Roger Craig and top receivers Jamie Williams and Todd Brown, who usually finish it in the end zone, also return, with veteran lineman Randy Theiss and Mike Mandelko clearing the way.

Linebackers Steve Damkroger and Brent Evans are back as the leading tacklers from a defense that was stingiest in the Big Eight and No. 6 in the nation. Tackle Toby Williams and middle guard Jeff Merrell "have qualities that put them in the All-American category," Line Coach Charlie McBride said. End Tony Felici will return after tying Waechter for the tackling lead up front.

"Offensively, we're a little more solid

than we've been in some time. The kicking game (with punter Grant Campbell, place kicker Kevin Seibel and returner Irving Fryar) is reasonably good," Osborne said. "But quarterback is a little bit of a concern."

At the worst, quarterback is similar to a year ago when little-tried Mark Mauer emerged as the leader. At best, the Huskers will be giddy with optimism.

Gill, who came on to direct six of the seven conference victories and as acclaimed All-Big Eight, has endured a slow mending process after two operations on a damaged nerve in his leg.

Mason, who had earned the starting job, missed the Big Eight season after surgery to remove calcium deposits from his ankle. "He's still hobbled, but he's better," Osborne said.

"Ideally, we'd like to be able to have Turner take some snaps and run some plays without scrimmaging this spring and get Nate a lot of work. There's some chance for that."

Veteran Bruce Mathison, who finished the season as Mauer's backup, and rookies Craig, Sundberg, Travis Turner and Todd Zart will be the spring challengers. "We'll look at them all. A lot will depend on who's healthy," Osborne said.

By April 24, when the Cornhuskers show off in the annual spring game, the repair work will be mostly completed, and Osborne and staff will know which players will handle the title defense. There will be time for refinements in the fall, but those 20 intense sessions in the spring will establish the pecking order at every position.

The Huskers "should be in pretty good shape" for running backs, Backfield Coach Mike Corgan said in something of an understatement. Craig and Rozier finished as the Nos. 3 and 5 ground gainers, respectively, in the Big Eight while splitting time at I-back. They combined for 2,035 yards.

Both averaged over six yards per carry, and both were named to all-conference teams. Which brings up the old question of how to get both of them into the same lineup.

"We don't anticipate any big changes in formations. We were second in rushing and first in total offense in the Big Eight, which is a pretty enviable position," Corgan said. "With split backs, the timing is all different. You'd have to limit the I-formation and cut

out half the things we're doing in the I. We tried to split backs a couple of years ago with (Rick) Berns and (I. M.) Hipp. Where you get in a bind is in automatics and pass protection. That's something our I-backs aren't geared up to do. Our fullbacks are a different breed of cat."

He did not rule out working Craig some at fullback.

Craig, who will be a senior, "has a little better speed and quickness. Mike is a little better in traffic. Roger is trying to get bigger. He's pretty skinny at 216, and he is trying to get to 225. He can run a 4.5 40 now. It will be interesting to see if he can handle the extra weight," Corgan said.

Rozier, who will be a junior, transferred from junior college last fall and "learned as much in a short time as any kid we've had. He may be able to do some things yet that we don't even know about.

"We've started having him throw the ball a little (Rozier passed for a touchdown in the Orange Bowl). What we ought to do is put in the wishbone

and make him a quarterback. He'd be a good one. The problem is, he'd never exercise the option; he'd always keep the ball," Corgan said.

Sophomores Tim Brungardt of Norfolk and heralded redshirt Jeff Smith of Wichita will get a hard look this spring, Corgan said. "You can't have too many I-backs. Jeff didn't get too far behind last year because he didn't go to the scout team. We didn't know if we'd need him. It always goes back to Monte Anthony's freshman year when we had all those backs and ended up starting him."

Despite the loss of Bates, Corgan said, "We should be in pretty good shape at fullback. We've got some physical kids."

Letterman Mark Moravec may be slowed following shoulder surgery, but Colorado soph Doug Wilkening has fully recovered from back problems, and will open at No. 1.

"They're probably not as quick as Phil," Corgan said. "Wilkening probably should have played more last

year. Rathman (Grand Island freshman Tom) started coming along pretty well. Roscoe Horn (Minneapolis freshman) is a good prospect, but he has to be housebroken. He plays too much alley football.

"A couple of things have happened in the last year that make me enthused. We had Bates, Moravec and Dan Ripa 1-2-3. Rathman and Wilkening clouded up the situation in a good way."

In his first year as a regular, tight end Jamie Williams led the Huskers with 22 receptions for 282 yards and four touchdowns and was an All-Big Eight choice. "But he needs to be more physical and make people pay the price," Receivers Coach Gene Huey said.

One of the pleasant developments last season was the progress of backup tight end Mitch Krenk, a Nebraska City soph who had two touchdowns among his nine receptions.

Against Oklahoma State, Osborne had planned an isolation pass to the tight end on the opening play, but

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Williams, the intended receiver, was injured on the kickoff. "Tom was concerned about calling the play with Mitch in there. I said, 'Hey, he does it every day in practice and never drops the ball,'" Huey said.

Krenk opened the game with a 21-yard gain. "We're OK at tight end for another year," Huey said.

Third-year split end Todd Brown "is a big-play kid with great speed and jumping ability," Huey said, and letterman Tom Vergith is back for another go, but Huey is perhaps most enthused with the prospect of the return of Ricky Simmons, who redshirted last year after lettering as a sophomore.

"I'm excited because the kid has matured. He's a classic example of the value of redshirting. He would have wasted a year last year. He's got all the equipment, all that speed. He was gliding, not knowing what it takes to play."

"Every great athlete feels like he should be playing. One day in practice, he was spouting off to a guy he didn't know, about how good he was and how much he should be playing. It turned out to be my cousin, Ben Gregory. But Ricky took his licks on the scout team and learned what it takes to play here," Huey said.

Huey will miss the enthusiasm and leadership of Steels at wingback, "but we're not going to drop off that much" because sophomore Irving Fryar, the leading punt returner in the Big Eight, is back.

"You can talk about potential, but

he's just scratched the surface. He didn't start using his size and speed until midseason. He was just an average receiver. He's like Junior Miller (Husker All-American tight end, now with the Atlanta Falcons). All his talents and abilities are below the water line. He has a lot of work to do."

The offensive line prospects improved dramatically when Rimington decided to return. Backup Brad Johnson, who will be the snapper on punts and place kicks, "is a good player, and we wouldn't be out of business with him," Line Coach Cletus Fischer said. "But, frankly, it's pretty hard to replace Rimington."

The big senior-to-be from Omaha South was labeled the best lineman in the country and player of the year in the Big Eight. He underwent exploratory knee surgery after the Orange Bowl.

"Any time you have the best center in the country, it makes the job a little easier. He has great balance, strength and experience. It's tough to knock defensive guys off the line of scrimmage nowadays. But he's one guy who can do it."

"He'll do some work this spring if he's capable, but you don't want to get that kind of guy hurt. He's proved himself," Fischer said.

Fischer also will work with three of his four guards from last year — Mandelko, Curt Glathar and Dean Steinkuhler. Mandelko will open on the left side, Glathar at right guard and Steinkuhler as a swing man. "If Steinkuhler looks like he's the best

right guard, he'll stay there. Mike was hurt some last year, and Steinkuhler had to pick up the slack. He should be outstanding."

"We're going to have some competition to develop depth. Anthony Thomas and Scott McLaughlin (redshirts) will be in there," Fischer said.

Theiss, a three-year stalwart and Minnesotan Jeff Kwapick, a backup last year, will get first call at tackle. "They're both good players, but they might not stack up to Hurley yet. He was a complete player," Fischer said.

Squadman Scott Raridon and 1981 redshirts John Sherlock and Mark Traynowicz (moving from center) will provide competition, "and we might give Anthony Thomas a shot at tackle," Fischer said.

Two-thirds of the interior defensive line is in the good hands of Toby Williams and Jeff Merrell, who have demonstrated all-star qualities.

"Both are candidates for All-Big Eight, I'm sure," Coach McBride said. Middle guard Merrell "is the most underrated player on the team. We're pretty solid at nose."

Tackle Williams combines strength and speed and is as good a pro prospect as we've had. He had an early illness last year, and he never was 100 percent. His weight was down 20 pounds. He was playing, but not as well as he can. So I expect him to have a big year," McBride said.

Tom Gdowski, who backed up Williams last year and started when Williams was out, "is tough and strong, but he needs to work on his

quickness and agility. Redshirt Ken Graeber and freshman Ken Shead will open behind Merrell.

"At the other tackle, Doug Herrmann (junior this fall) was probably our most improved player last year. He was a fullback and tight end on the freshman team, but he outgrew the positions," McBride said. The South Dakotan goes 6-3x260.

Herrmann's top challengers will be Lexington soph Rob Stuckey and junior college transfer Kevin Waechter, brother of departed tackle Henry. "Kevin's not as big as Henry, but he's faster," McBride said. Sophs Mike Keeler and Ron Bachmann also are line candidates.

"Maybe overall our depth is a little better," McBride said.

Linebacker is so well staffed that Coach John Melton will withhold his prizes from most scrimmages. "Our biggest problem is developing the young players. I'm not going to spend a lot of time with our three seniors. We have to worry a great deal about coming years."

Leading tacklers Steve Damkroger and Brent Evans have proved themselves, Melton said, "but I'll have to watch them so they don't sneak into the scrimmages." Fellow senior-to-be McWhirter, who started as a sophomore but was limited by a knee injury last year, will sit out the spring after surgery.

Mike Knox, who was a special teams demon last year as a freshman, classmate Stanley Wade and oft-injured soph Todd Spratte "will get a lot of work, and we're going to get a good look at (Rob) Debus and (Mark) Dahm," Melton said.

"Linebackers have a tendency to get hurt a lot because they're on the kicking teams. You can never have too many linebackers," he said.

Defensive end "is going to be a wide-open situation. For the first time in three or four years, we don't have an All-American candidate. That makes it exciting. It's going to be interesting to see who rises to the occasion," Ends Coach George Darlington said.

Tony Felici is a holdover starter and

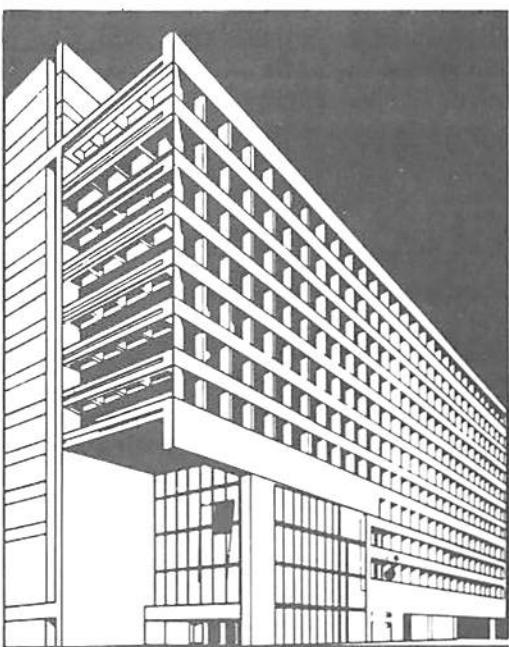
logged more tackles than All-American Jimmy Williams, but Darlington said Felici is prone to making too many mistakes. Felici is undersized at 200 pounds, "but he can play the tight end like a guy 220. He can jack you up. I'm not concerned about his size," Darlington said.

Charlie McBride — "Toby Williams and Jeff Merrell have qualities that put them in the All-American category. Jeff is the most underrated player on the team. Toby is as good a pro prospect as we've had."
(See center spread, pg. 32, 33.)

Because of heavy losses in the secondary, the Husker staff sought immediate help with the January enrollment of cornerback Kevin Biggers, a transfer from Mount San Antonio (Calif.) Junior College. The Cardena, Calif., native was a two-time captain as a linebacker at Mt. Sac. ●

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Husker Baseball Team Young But Experienced

Disappointment of 1981 turns to optimism for Big Eight tournament runner-up.

By rights, the Nebraska baseball team probably shouldn't have gotten to the championship game of last year's Big Eight Conference post-season tournament.

Early in the year, NU Head Coach John Sanders made a decision to live or die with some talented young pitchers, and throughout the conference season, the Cornhuskers died many deaths. Nebraska's 11-11 Big Eight record reflected the inconsistency of youth and barely earned the team a trip to Oklahoma City for the conference's double-elimination tournament.

There was much evidence of Nebraska's immaturity.

Freshman Anthony Kelley, who threw a no-hitter against Oklahoma during Nebraska's first weekend of Big Eight play, lasted only two innings against Kansas in a series the Jayhawks nearly swept, winning three of four. In a disappointing four-game split with Kansas State, Nebraska's young pitching staff yielded 31 runs.

When Missouri came to Lincoln for a crucial four-game series, NU freshman Bob Sebra opened game No. 3 and absorbed a 13-0 loss. Jeff Anderson, yet another freshman, came back in the second game and shut out the Tigers on two hits.

Each disappointment was balanced by glimpses of excellence.

Anderson, for instance, "was consistent the whole year; he was (tough as) nails," Sanders said.

The right-hander from Nampa, Idaho, was the team's most active pitcher, appearing in 22 games. He led the staff in victories with eight, and earned-run average (2.15) as well as completing

all three games he started. Anderson's earned-run average in conference play was a league-leading 0.82.

In spite of the odds, the Cornhuskers did reach the Big Eight Tournament for the third straight year, and they went farther than anyone, with the possible exception of Sanders, expected. In their first game at Oklahoma City, they defeated defending tournament champion Missouri, 9-4, and after losing to Oklahoma State, 7-5, dumped Missouri again, 8-7, to eliminate the favored Tigers.

Nebraska was faced with having to win twice on the final day of the double-elimination tournament, and its pitchers were arm-weary. But the Cornhuskers refused to give in.

In the afternoon, sophomore Steve Gehrke pitched a seven-hitter and defeated the Cowboys 6-2. "Gerk siffed'em," said Sanders.

Then that night, with Sanders asking for volunteers, Sebra showed the resiliency of youth. He didn't beat Oklahoma State; the Cowboys won the Big Eight tournament's championship game, 3-1, and went on to finish second in the College World Series. But Sebra, who finished with a 7-5 record and led the team in strikeouts (a school record 90 in 80 innings of work) gave Oklahoma State a scare, working seven innings, allowing seven hits and only two runs.

Though it was a disappointing finish, it foreshadowed an optimism which translated into a No. 10 ranking in Collegiate Baseball's 1982 preseason Top 30.

Sanders was flattered. "I know this doesn't sound like good coaches' talk,

but it's nice to be rated that high. It doesn't put us under any pressure. We want our players to be motivated internally, but we also want to reach the point where the expectation level from outside our team is high.

"The cliche still holds. It's the season-ending poll that's most important, but being rated is something the players can be proud of. There's nothing wrong with a little external motivation," he said.

The price Sanders paid for using freshman pitchers a year ago can be applied to this season as Nebraska looks to return to NCAA regional competition after a year's absence. It was an investment which should produce significant dividends. "Our pitching is experienced, and it's really some young experience," Sanders said, looking to this year's Big Eight Conference schedule.

"Last year we asked three freshmen to assume a much greater role than ever before, so they have that experience." In addition, Sanders has Gehrke, a junior who already has been in the starting rotation for two full seasons.

In those seasons, the righthander from Murray, Utah, has compiled a 15-6 record. Gehrke started slowly as a sophomore, moving from the No. 4 position in the starting rotation to the No. 1 "hole". But "that's a tremendous physical and mental adjustment," said Sanders.

Gehrke finished with a 7-4 record and a 4.12 earned-run average, starting 12 games and completing seven.

He has always pitched best in tough situations like last spring's Big Eight

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Baseball

CONTINUED FROM 18

tournament, however. As a freshman, Gehrke was chosen on the NCAA Mideast Regional all-tournament team in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Gehrke, the three sophomores and senior Mike Vojtesak are the known qualities on pitching coach Tay Tromba's staff, but they aren't the only reasons for optimism.

Sanders has added three junior college transfers and two mature freshmen, so that "we have a variety of types and styles of pitches," he said. "We appear to have good depth, and we should be able to come with some different looks."

The transfers are Todd Oakes, from Spring Grove, Minn., by way of Waldorf Junior College in Forest City, Iowa; Jeff Johnson from Pasadena, Calif., by way of Glendale Junior College; and Ben Amaya, who was both a pitcher and catcher for two seasons at Saddleback Junior College in Mission Viejo, Calif.

Oakes and Johnson have been major league draftees at least once, as have Gehrke, Anderson, Sebra and Vojtesak.

Amaya played in Alaska's tough collegiate league last summer and ranked fourth in earned-run average. According to Sanders, who laughed when he said it, Amaya's pitcher-catcher combination "sets baseball back several years."

"We expect junior college transfers to do the job right away, and these guys seem to be ready to do the job," said Sanders.

The freshmen from whom Sanders expects immediate help both are left-handers, Jeff Koenigsman and Mark Davis.

Koenigsman, a multisport athlete at Omaha Creighton Prep, has impressed Tromba, who also predicted Jeff Anderson would be successful as a freshman even when he (Anderson) was having problems early. "Ray says the same things about Koenigsman," Sanders said. "Jeff's poised and might be able to pitch above the freshman level this season." Koenigsman also can play the outfield, as can Davis,

who came to Nebraska on a football scholarship from Okauchee, Wisc.

A fastball pitcher, he was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates out of Oconomowok, Wisc., High School where he played for the state Class A baseball champions in 1980.

Completing Nebraska's staff are Omaha sophomores Tom Holmes and Chris Knust, who originally came to Nebraska as a football quarterback, and Lincoln freshman Mark Honnor and Mike Dobbs. Honnor also can play first base.

Pitching depth is even more important this season than it was a year ago because Big Eight doubleheaders will be comprised of a seven-inning game and a nine-inning game instead of two seven-inning games, as was the case in the past.

Sanders thinks his young staff "has a chance to be the best we've had."

First baseman Steve Stanicek is the cornerstone on which the Cornhusker infield is built. The junior from Park Forest, Ill., hit .314 with 10 home runs and 552 runs-batted-in a year ago. Seven of his home runs and 22 of his RBIs came in conference games. Both were league-leading totals.

As a freshman, after being a 10th-round draft choice of the St. Louis Cardinals out of Rich East High School, Stanicek established a single-season NU school record by hitting 12 home runs. "We're comfortable with Stano," Sanders said.

The rest of the infield is new with junior college transfers Dan Tomich and Dan Boever at third and short, respectively, and Scott Hooper, Kurt Eubanks or Jeff Carter at second. Hooper and Eubanks are sophomores;

Carter is a freshman from Evanston, Ill.

Tomich, who is from Torrance, Calif., played at El Camino Junior College the last two seasons. "Dan is a little bit of an unknown," said Sanders. "He didn't have a super year in junior college, but he had a good fall and we expect him to do well."

Boever played at Westark Junior College in Fort Smith, Ark., last

First baseman Steve Stanicek is the cornerstone on which the Cornhusker infield is built.

season and has been drafted twice by major league teams.

According to Sanders, the 6-1, 180-pounder from Remsen, Iowa, "is a little different type of shortstop than we've had recently." Players like John Russo, Greg Schafer and Chris Chavez "were smaller and quicker," while Boever is "bigger and more physical. He has a strong arm; he's aggressive, has good range, and he's working on his hitting," Sanders said.

Stanicek, Tomich and Boever are expected to pick up slack at second base until the younger players there gain Big Eight level experience.

Senior Roger Hill, an all-conference performer, returns in fleet outfield which includes lettermen Harold Bright, another senior, and John

CONTINUED ON 47

1981-82 Baseball Schedule

Doubleheaders — first game 9 innings, second game, 7 innings.

February 24-27, Las Vegas Tournament, five games.

March 6, Sioux Falls College, 1:00 p.m.; March 13-23, at Pan American Tournament, 12 games; March 25, North Dakota State, 1:30 p.m.; March 27-28, Oklahoma State, 1:00 p.m.; March 31, Kearney State, 1:30 p.m.

April 3-4, at Missouri, 1:00 p.m.;

April 6, UNO, 1:30 p.m.; April 9-10, Kansas State, 1:00 p.m.; April 13, Northwest Missouri State, 2:00 p.m.; April 14, at Creighton, 1:30 p.m.; April 17-18, at Iowa State, 1:00 p.m.; April 20, at UNO, 1:30 p.m.; April 21, Wayne State, 1:30 p.m.; April 24-25, Kansas, 1:00 p.m.; April 28, Creighton, 1:30 p.m.; April 30-May 1, at Oklahoma, 1:00 p.m.; May 7, Creighton, 3:00 p.m.; May 8, at Creighton, 1:00 p.m. and May 13-16, Big Eight Playoffs.

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NFL Scouts Finding Talent In Big Eight

Defensive players get most of the attention as the pros plan their 1982 draft for late April.

National Football League talent scouts are certainly not surprised by the fact that more than half a dozen of the players picked to the 1982 Pro Bowl came from Big Eight Conference schools. The heart of the Midlands has always been a proving ground for pro stars of the future.

So not only did the presence of such former Big Eight players as Billy Sims, Lee Roy Selmon, Junior Miller, Kellen Winslow, Matt Blair, Nolan Cromwell et al enhance the prestige of the league, but so did the noticeable absence of others from the Big Eight — like Greg Pruitt, Joe Washington, Greg Roberts, Vince Ferragamo (in the Canadian Football League), and many others.

Once again this year the NFL will be dipping into the Big Eight reservoir to find players who have the physical talent and the coaching, not to mention the lessons learned through tough competition, week after week.

This does not, however, appear to be a banner year for the Big Eight seniors. Nebraska and Oklahoma both relied heavily on underclassmen this past fall. So did Missouri, Kansas and the other league contenders.

The All Big Eight quarterback, for example, was Nebraska's Turner Gill — only a sophomore. Husker running backs Roger Craig and Mike Rozier will

both be back, the latter for two more years. Oklahoma's top runner, fullback Stanley Wilson, has another year of eligibility remaining.

Iowa State's Dwayne Crutchfield was the Big Eight's top rusher with 1,189 yards, despite being slowed by an injury the last third of the season. Only OU quarterback Darrell Shepard and Missouri running back Bob Meyer were able to join Crutchfield as seniors in that top 10 rushing parade, however.

Crutchfield saw plenty of action in post-season all-star games and is undoubtedly high on someone's draft list as a running back. He fits the NFL mold very well, as he's big and strong and has a quick start.

But it is highly unlikely that the Big Eight will have a first-round pick among quarterbacks and running backs. Iowa State's John Quinn, selected over Gill on the United Press International all-league squad, is a senior, but regarded as a sleeper in the draft.

The situation is much the same at receiver positions. Wayne Capers of Kansas, the league's leading pass grabber, is only a junior. So is James Caver of Missouri, the No. 2 receiver in the Big Eight. Missouri tight end Andy Gibler has another year left. So does Nebraska's Jeff Gaylord.

Thus the Big Eight appears to have

minimal contributions to make this year in the way of offensive skill people. Even the top place kickers in the league are youngsters — led, of course, by Oklahoma State's freshman sensation Larry Roach. Bruce Kallmeyer of Kansas is only a sophomore.

The offensive line, however, is another matter. How many leagues have a second-team all-conference center who will be drafted as high as Missouri's Brad Edelman should be. Edelman was picked as a pre-season All-American last summer, but was overshadowed by Nebraska's Outland Trophy winner Dave Rimington, only a junior.

Dan Hurley of Nebraska, Terry Crouch of Oklahoma and Edelman should go fairly high in the draft.

The league should also make some contributions defensively to the NFL. Nebraska's Jimmy Williams has the size and quickness to make him an excellent prospect as an outside linebacker. And Missouri's Jeff Gaylord, although lacking the size many pro teams prefer, had such an outstanding season that he got an opportunity to impress in post-season play.

Oklahoma State linebacker Ricky Young will also go high in the draft. He won all-league honors three straight years.

But Nebraska's Jimmy Williams



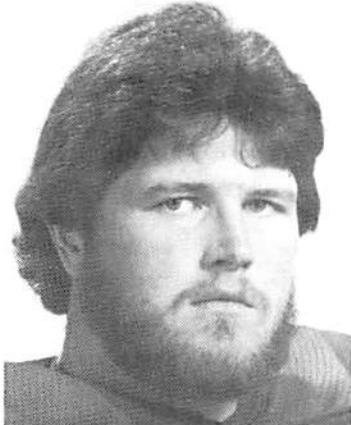
Bill Bechtold



Terry Crouch



Ed Culver



Lyndle Byford

should be the first to go, and he's rated right behind Johnnie Cooks of Mississippi State and Chip Banks of Southern Cal among the national linebacking prospects. Even Gaylord could wind up being drafted as a linebacker, although he probably won't go the first day of the draft.

Center is really the position that the Big Eight will help the pros at the most. Edelman and Mike Baab of Texas are generally regarded as the top middlemen in the country — among the seniors, that is. Rimington had considered by-passing his final year at Nebraska and graduating early, but changed his mind.

Close behind Baab and Edelman are Colorado's Rich Umphrey (6-3, 240) and Oklahoma's Bill Bechtold (6-5, 250). Bechtold, a Midwest City High School end before coming to OU, was one of the unsung heroes on the veteran Sooner line this past season.

Crouch and Hurley should go in early rounds as guards, but there are several other Big Eight offensive linemen who could get those all-important phone calls late in April.

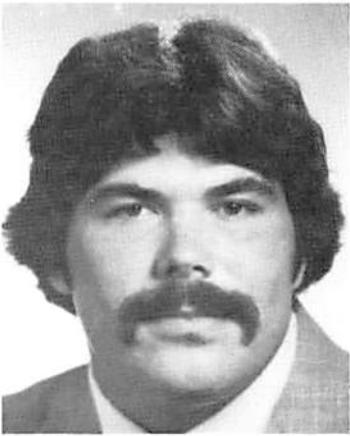
Lyndle Byford (6-6, 295) and Ed Culver (6-3, 265) of Oklahoma appear to be good bets to be drafted the second day. And Colorado's Bob Sebro (6-3, 260) and Brant Thurston (6-5, 270) are tackles who have gotten some notice. The latter, due to a history of injuries, might wind up being a free agent signee.

Nebraska guard Tom Carlstrom (6-5, 266) could surprise some people, also, while David Lawrence of Kansas and Doug Krahenbuhl are free agent types.

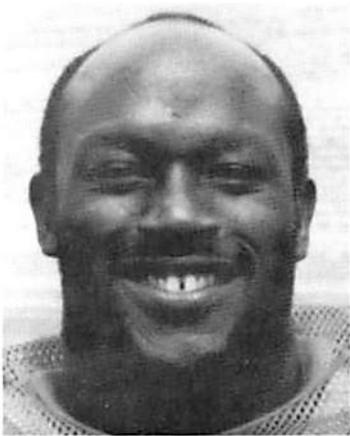
While the league did not have a standout senior at the wide receiver position, there are a few who have received feelers from the pros. Included is Kansas State's Eugene Goodlow, who passed up football his senior year, but could go the first day in the draft.

Goodlow is a better physical prospect at 6-1, 188, than the other Big Eight receivers. But Nebraska's Randy Brooks is a possibility, as are Oklahoma's Bobby Grayson and Oklahoma State's Ron Ingram. Vic James of Colorado is another who could be drafted in a late round.

A benefactor of the performance by former Nebraska fullback Andra Franklin in the pros could be Husker Phil Bates, who played well in his lone year as a starter. Crutchfield (6-1, 235) is ranked very high in the fullback ranks, but Bates (6-1, 210) is not far



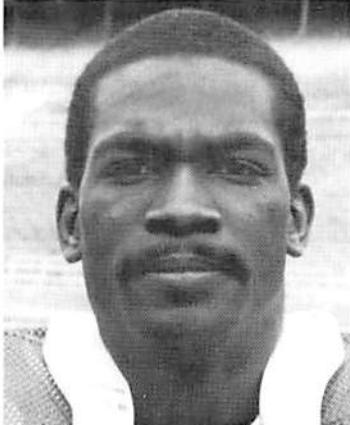
Dan Hurley



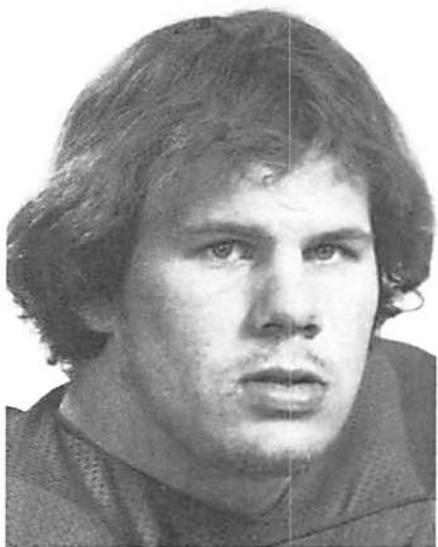
Sammy Sims



Jimmy Williams



Phil Bates



Scott Dawson

behind.

Defensively, prospects are much brighter for the Big Eight seniors of this year.

In addition to Jimmy Williams as a potential first or second-round pick, the Cornhuskers have a promising defensive end in Henry Waechter (6-6, 265). In a year with few "big names" at that position, Waechter could go fairly high. So could Pete Perry of Colorado, who is an imposing figure at 6-5, 250, but was somewhat lost in the disastrous seasons at Boulder the past two seasons.

This was not a good year for defensive tackles in the Big Eight, at least as far as seniors were concerned. Sophomores like Ricky Bryan of Oklahoma and Reggie Singletary of Kansas State hogged honors.

But Scott Dawson, who missed the entire season at OU because of injuries, is highly regarded because of his strength. Only his lack of height (6-1 1/2, 255) keeps him from being an even brighter prospect in a year when Kenneth Sims of Texas is expected to strike a blow for tackles by being named the No. 1 pick in the draft by New England.

The Sooners' Johnnie Lewis cost himself a much higher draft number when he suffered through an inconsistent senior year. But he has the physical tools to be given a try at nose tackle by some team.

Another "non-player" of 1981, Oklahoma's Mike Reilly, is mentioned as a possible low-round pick at linebacker. He missed most of his senior year after being dismissed from the OU team by head coach Barry Switzer. But he has the size at 6-3, 220, combined with a physical style of play

the pros like.

Nebraska's secondary should combine for a pretty good package of bonus money.

There are few cornerbacks around the country rated higher than the Huskers' Rodney Lewis (5-11, 185) due to his speed and nose for the football. And NU safety Sammy Sims (6-0, 192) is rated on a par with John Krimm of Notre Dame and Thomas Morris of Michigan State.

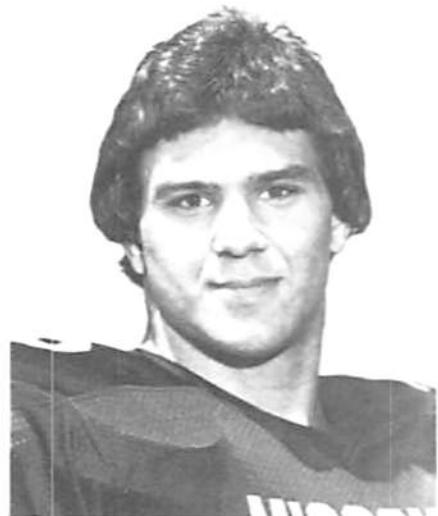
The *Football News*, in its March 30 edition, also lists Nebraska's Ric Lindquist and Jeff Krejci as possible free agents. That's good news for NU recruits and reserves eyeing jobs in the secondary.

Colorado's Rickey Bynum is a potential draftee in the late rounds at corner and others, like Pete DiClementi of OSU and Byron Paul of OU (he, too, sat out his final year) are outside shots.

As mentioned, New England is expected to go for Sims, the massive destroyer who helped lead Texas to the Cotton Bowl, despite a second-place finish in the Southwest Conference (SMU was on probation).

After that, however, things get pretty muddy and confusing.

The Baltimore Colts have talked of trading Bert Jones, leaving the quarterback job open for one of several potential NFL flingers coming out of the college ranks this year. Ohio State's Art Schlichter had two disappointing years in a row after brilliant freshmen and sophomore campaigns. But he is still rated by many pro scouts as a better NFL prospect than record-setting Jim McMahon of Brigham Young (the pros would be a lot higher on him if



Brad Edelman

McMahon were higher than his not quite 6-foot).

The first running back to go could be Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Allen of Southern Cal. But don't be too surprised if he has to wait until someone has taken Michigan speedster Butch Woolfolk. Although both are about the same size, the Wolverine has great acceleration. Neither of those backs, however, is likely to go before linebackers Banks and Cooks and Penn State guard Sean Farrell.

Another back the pros covet is Baylor's Walter Abercrombie, who can't match Woolfolk's 4.45 speed in the 40, but can catch the football, block and run inside or out.

New Orleans gave up its third pick in the first round to get Illinois quarterback Dave Wilson in the supplemental draft of last year. Wilson was ineligible to play his senior year because of grades.

Cleveland will have the No. 4 pick, followed by Los Angeles (the first of two much needed choices in the opening round) and Chicago.

Then come Seattle, Minnesota, Houston, Atlanta, Oakland, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Detroit, Kansas City, Tampa Bay, New York Giants and Denver. Rounding out the picking game will be Philadelphia at No. 21, Buffalo, Green Bay, New York Jets, Miami, Dallas, Cincinnati and, of course, the Super Bowl champions San Francisco.

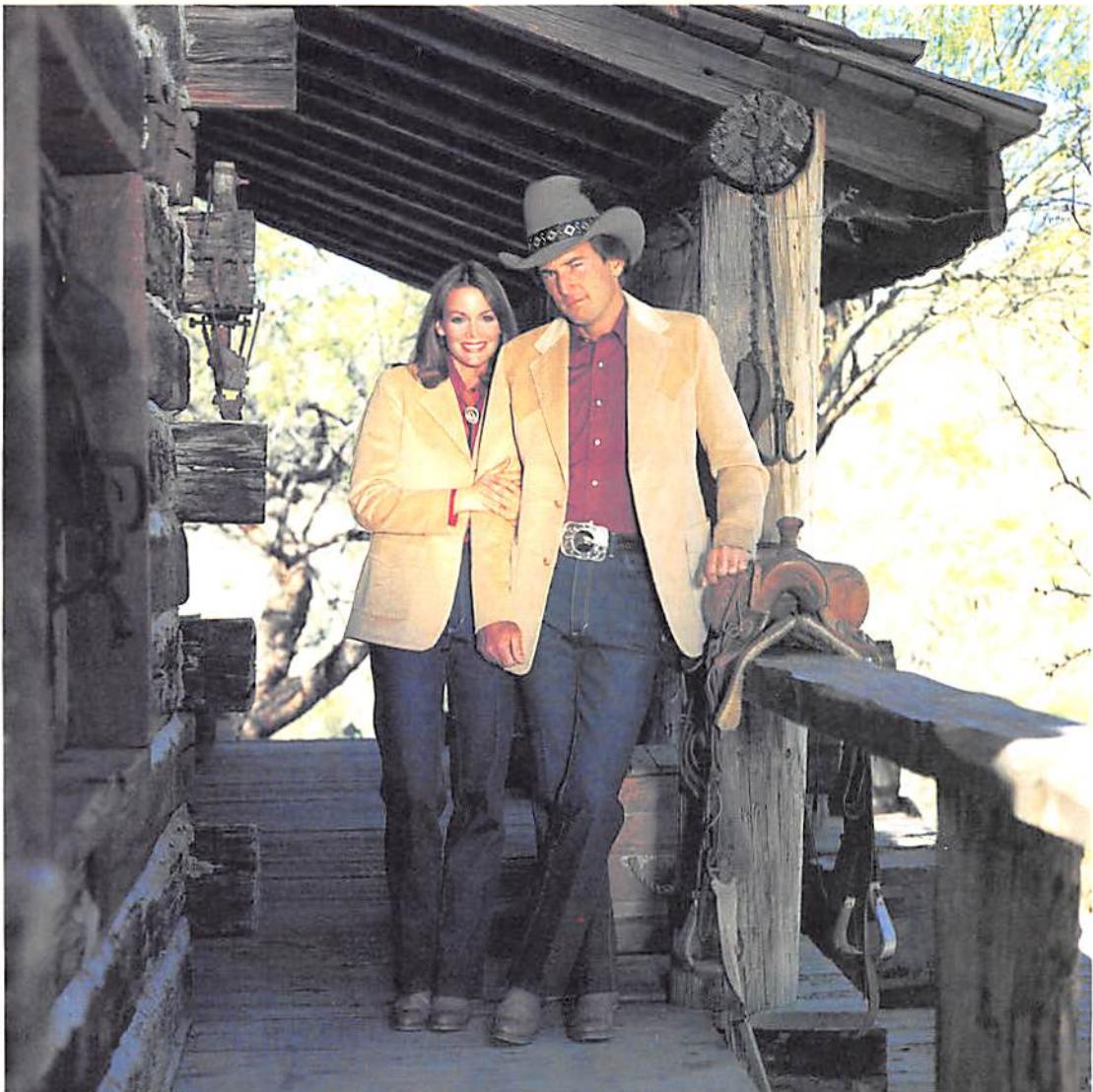
No team is more aware of what a good draft can do than the 49ers. They started three rookies in their secondary to turn an ordinary defense into one of the best in all of football. ●



Dwayne Crutchfield



SHEPLERS
THE WORLD'S LARGEST WESTERN STORES



**BECAUSE THERE'S
A LITTLE BIT OF COWBOY
IN ALL OF US!**

I-40 AND MERIDIAN IN OKLAHOMA CITY
IN THE REGENCY, ACROSS FROM WEST ROADS IN OMAHA

Nebraska, Oklahoma Cage Talent Top Level

By Al Eschbach

High school standouts in Big Reds' backyards are better than ever, and coaches from all corners of the country know it.

Now it's not unusual if you go to a basketball game in the state of Indiana and see the likes of Dean Smith, Denny Crum, Jerry Tarkanian and Eddie Sutton.

This year has been a little unusual. These well-known coaches keep popping up in states such as Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Nebraska and Oklahoma? Now these two states attract big name college football talent scouts from all over the land. But basketball is a different story. They are not known as basketball producing states for your basketball giants. Sure, there have been exceptions. Year-in and year-out, however, you're not going to import big name college powers to recruit the two states.

That was until the 1981-82 season. A bevy of hoop powerhouses have spent hours upon hours flying into Nebraska and Oklahoma. Some have left with a great deal of success. Others have left with nothing but heartbreak.

The benefactors of this rare crop should be Moe Iba and Billy Tubbs. The two Big Eight coaches just smile when they drive around their respective states to watch high school players in action. Just how well the Huskers and Sooners cash in remains to be seen. However, both schools could have their greatest recruiting years ever in basketball if things fall into place around home.

The talent in Nebraska has made the Huskers employ a very unusual

recruiting tactic. Earlier in the winter, two of the best players in the state — Kerry Trotter (6-foot-6) of Omaha Creighton Prep and Bill Jackman (6-foot-9) of Grant — announced their intention of attending other schools. Trotter said he was going to Marquette and Jackman announced his intentions for Duke.

The Huskers weren't about to let the pair go without a fight. They decided to post petitions just inside the arena urging the players to go to Nebraska. Fans signed these petitions when they arrived at the basketball games. They will be presented to both Trotter and Jackman. The nationally acclaimed upset of Missouri, should help, also.

The recruiting fever has reached such intensity that Randy York of the *Lincoln Journal-Star* wrote an open column to another Nebraska prep standout, David Hoppen (6-foot-11) of Omaha Benson, urging him not to make the same mistake Trotter and Jackman made by going elsewhere.

Another high school star, Ron Kellogg (6-foot-5) of Omaha Northwest, snubbed the Huskers for Big Eight rival, Kansas. You would think Iba would be mourning. On the contrary, the Huskers got the man they wanted the most, Hoppen, and appear set to get a lot more.

And in Oklahoma, the crowds at Tulsa Washington games have been SRO the entire season. And one of the reasons is the presence of 6-foot-9,

Waymon Tisdale. "He's definitely the top center prospect in the nation," said Nevada-Las Vegas assistant Tim Grgurich. "He will be a great one."

Former Oklahoma assistant Doug Ash, now at SMU, added, "He's a franchise player. He can do it all because he's such a great athlete."

There have been quite a few rumors as to where Tisdale will wind up. There were early reports that he would go to Purdue. A couple of weeks later it was Kansas. Then commentator Dick Vitale announced on an ESPN cable broadcast that, "Tisdale was about locked up for Tulsa."

Tubbs has employed a guarded confidence about signing this "franchise" when the April 14 signing date rolls around. "The other schools may say they have a lot, but I guarantee we have the most influential person on Waymon right on our campus...his brother, William."

William was an all-stater at Washington last year, and is receiving a hardship ruling at Oklahoma this season because he had surgery on his leg in December. He will be a freshman in eligibility next year.

The Sooner state also has such gems as point guards Steve Hale of Jenks and Mark Price of Enid. They have created quite a stir. Both could possibly leave the state as Tubbs insists his number one priority is "Getting as many players over 6-6 that we can. We need to help ourselves up front." In fact, Hale may

join Dean Smith at North Carolina.

Both the Huskers and the Sooners are going with coaches just in their second year as head coach. They admit they're just starting to play catch-up.

"There's no doubt about it, we're just starting to get where we want to be," declared Husker assistant Charlie Spoonhour. "Last year was Moe's first full year and it takes awhile to get things going and organized the way you want them to be. We've made great strides this year."

"I really think a key in recruiting is getting a lot of early commitments and then start to recruit for next year. That's what Iowa did this year. They got some great players to commit early and then they had the luxury to begin working on some of the top juniors around."

Tubbs agrees 100 per cent.

"That's why I think we're going to have the recruiting success I'm hoping for. Most of the players we are recruiting were ones we got in on last year. You wouldn't believe what a big advantage that is. When I first got here last year, we certainly didn't have that edge."

The first big dividends that started to pay off for the Huskers and the Sooners were Hoppen and Mike Martz (6-foot-6) of Beatrice, Neb., for Iba, and Aaron Combs (6-foot-8) of National City, Calif., for Tubbs.

"Hoppen was the player we had to get," says Spoonhour. "Of all of those players in Omaha, we wanted Hoppen the most. He has a chance to be a great player. He can do it all. He can shoot (averaging 25 points a game) and can intimidate you on defense. He's a good shot blocker."

"He's built somewhat like Alvan Adams (former Oklahoma great now with the Phoenix Suns). And he's the type of player who can come in and help you right away. I think one of the best quotes describing our situation with Hoppen was when Tom Apke at Colorado said, 'Moe Iba has been winning with a 6-5 center this year. Can you imagine what he's going to do with someone 6-11'?"

Martz made an early decision to come to Nebraska. He was an All-American honorable mention choice in *Street and Smith's* preseason magazine.

"Mike is another player who can help us quickly. He has been averaging

over 20 a game. He is the type of player who can penetrate and score for you or he could go to the outside and hit some long bombs."

The Sooners will be getting their most highly recruited player ever from California when Combs arrives. This sharp-shooting forward has been averaging 18 points and 13 rebounds a game for one of the top teams in California.

"He is quite a talent," says Tubbs. "He could play at a big guard, a small forward or a low post position. He is an outstanding shooter and does a good job rebounding. He should play right away with us."

"He fancies himself another Magic Johnson," says OU assistant Mike Newell.

During the Dave Bliss era the Sooners worked the California area

"Hoppen was the player we had to get," says Spoonhour.

"Of all those players in Omaha, we wanted Hoppen the most. He has a chance to be a great player. He can do it all."

hard and came home empty handed. After a couple of years of trying to harvest the crop, they gave up and decided not to go back. That didn't discourage Tubbs.

"We've made some good in-roads and Mike Newell has done a good job for us out there. We were really encouraged by the reception that we received." It didn't hurt in the recruiting of Combs that his father is an Oklahoma native and that he still has a lot of family living in Oklahoma City.

The Nebraska staff of Iba, Spoonhour and Tom Baack have not stayed home despite all of that fruitful talent. They've expanded some of their coverage trying to find the best available athletes.

"We're hitting Texas pretty hard. We think there are some good players down there," says Spoonhour. "And we're in St. Louis looking at a couple of players. However, it may be a difficult chore trying to get players away

from Missouri because of the year they're enjoying. And we're looking west in Colorado.

"We also are looking at some junior college players in Oklahoma, Texas and Iowa. We feel good about what has happened so far. We have the good base in Nebraska and that's so important. And there's still another Nebraska player we're recruiting. His name is Jamie Moore (6-foot-6) from Omaha Burke. He's a good player."

The Sooners are spread throughout the country. Tubbs, Newell and Johnny Carter have spent yeoman time in California, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan and the Chicago and Washington, D.C. areas.

They are fighting DePaul and Michigan State hard for the services of Marty Embry, a 6-foot-8 forward from Flint, Mich. Embry is regarded as one of the top players in the state. There has been some speculation that the Sooners could come up with Embry if Tisdale decides on Oklahoma.

Tubbs is keeping his fingers crossed on one of the best players in California, 6-foot-6, Kevin Hamilton of Crenshaw High School. Hamilton is a shooter deluxe and the Sooners may have a difficult time wresting him away from those West Coast powers. Another Californian Oklahoma has brought in to visit is 6-foot-8 Jerome Johnson in Englewood.

The Sooners have also been giving 6-foot-7 Illinois standout James Kimmons a close look. Kimmons is another big man who can shoot the ball. And 6-foot-8 Robert Littlejohn of Fort Wayne, Ind., is another name that pops up in Oklahoma recruiting conversations.

"Right now we plan to offer between four and six scholarships," Tubbs says. "I hope we get to a point where we have to make some decisions on good players. I think we're going to have to be very selective because of the response we've gotten."

A response you hear about Nebraska basketball is that it is slow, slow, slow. Spoonhour was asked if the Huskers' deliberate style of offense could hurt recruiting because so many high school players like to run and gun.

"Just look at the scores around the country this year. Most schools are scoring in the 50s and 60s," he pointed out. "In fact, one night I think our game might have even been the one



Cage Recruits

with the most points scored in Big Eight encounters.

"Our point total has been right around what Kansas State has been averaging. You don't hear people always talking about what kind of low scores the Wildcats play to. The trend around the country has been low-scoring games."

Spoonhour puts together a little recruiting message when he talks about the Husker program.

"Let me tell you something. We have some things that I don't think a lot of people realize. We've been leading the Big Eight in attendance this season. We haven't had a home game that we haven't drawn at least 8,000 fans. And last year we finished second in the league in attendance. So you can see the type of support that we have for the program here."

"And we have a beautiful facility to play in. I think ours matches the others we're competing against. And we have Moe Iba to sell to a recruit. He has been named Coach of the Year in the Big Eight Conference the past two years. So the recruits know they're going to be playing under the guidance of an outstanding coach."

While the Huskers want to play deliberate basketball, Tubbs wants to run his opponents into a fever pitch. This promoted one of his most memorable quotes during a dismal rookie season at Oklahoma. "This year we're going to run and gun. Next season we're going to run and score." Tubbs wants to get players who can get into a transition type of game.

"I get tired of people who keep on asking me if Oklahoma can have a great basketball program because it's a football school. Now do you think places like Kentucky, UCLA, Alabama, Notre Dame, Arkansas and North Carolina don't care about football?"

"We sell what we have. I think players in high school like to play the style of basketball we employ. They like to get up and down the court. We have a lot to sell at Oklahoma. We have great athletic tradition. And I guarantee you that the attendance figures are going to continue to grow as we win. We've filled the Lloyd Noble Arena. We're just going to start doing it with quite a bit more regularity."

The Sooners need to get immediate help up front because of the loss of Lester Pace and Larry Hendrix to graduation. Daryl Allen and Charles "Big Time" Jones will be seniors next year. That just about wipes out the entire front line.

"We have to get people in there who can play right away for us. People may wonder why we're not recruiting a lot of guards. We just don't have that desperate need there at this time. I think next year we can look at a lot of guards. We need inside people," Tubbs says.

While the Huskers want to play deliberate basketball, Tubbs wants to run the opponents into a fever pitch... "This year we're going to run and gun. Next year we're going to run and score."

The Huskers have also been concentrating on players who can go at either center or forward. "I think we'll offer four or five scholarships," said Spoonhour. "If we can get a really good point guard then we'll take him." The Huskers lose one of the top point guards in the league this year in Jackie Moore.

"If we can get a point guard then we can keep Handy Johnson at the second guard. But if we don't get one, Handy can play the point. And we also have high hopes for Eric Williams, who we are redshirting this year. We've been looking at the best available athletes. It won't kill us if we're unable to come up with a point player."

'I think that's why you saw so many players committing so early this year. They made all their visits before their season got underway. If you didn't get in on these players early, you are going to have a long recruiting year.'

Despite new NCAA legislation that prohibits a coach from visiting with a high school prospect during his season, both schools have been on the road quite a bit.

"Well, out of the last 36 days, I've been on the road 32 days," said Spoonhour. "We've really been out and about just watching all of the players we can. Even though you can't talk to the player after his game, you can do a good job of evaluation. That's a key."

Again, Tubbs goes back to last year.

"We brought in most of our prospects during the fall and had a great response from them. That's why I think we got such a good start. We watched these players last year and we made our contacts. We knew the players we wanted to recruit and we didn't have to begin to scramble."

"I think that's why you saw so many players commit so early this year. They made all of their visits before their season ever got underway. If you didn't get in on these players early, you are going to have a long recruiting year. We have a month before signing date that we can again make visits with the players, outside of the official visit. Obviously that's going to help. But most of the leg work has already been completed. A large percentage of the players already know where they're going."

And it will be percentages that play a big part in the Nebraska and Oklahoma recruiting campaigns. Both figure to get larger percentages of blue-chippers than ever before that could give the two football giants their greatest basketball recruiting crops ever. ●



Scotty Johnson performs his wizardry on the rings as part of the Husker show.

Top Gymnasts Dial Husker Number Now

'Best gymnastics team in college history' takes aim at record fourth NCAA title.

By Randy York

There was a time, believe it or not, when a national-caliber gymnast thought Nebraska was nothing more than a vast wasteland. A pommel horse in Lincoln packed about as much appeal as an Appaloosa in the Bronx. "We couldn't even get a good gymnast inside our front door," recalled NU Coach Francis Allen. "We didn't have a name, and he didn't want to look at us."

That was eight relatively short years ago. Now, Lincoln is considered the national gymnastics shrine. Allen has turned a tenement into a high-rise.

The Huskers are reputed to have the best coaches, best athletes, best facilities and best fans in the country. The combination has not gone unnoticed. For the third consecutive year, Nebraska will host the NCAA Championships, April 1-3. Unless the NCAA has miscalculated, Lincoln will host the same event next year, and the year after that, and the years after that. The NCAA intends to make Lincoln a per-

manent championship home, just as it has made Omaha the home of the College World Series.

"It's incredible," Allen said. "The same caliber of kid I couldn't get to answer the telephone is now calling us or writing us. I have 10 letters lying on my desk right now."

Allen isn't talking about your average high school gymnast. He's talking about the "creme de la creme". Nebraska has become accustomed to recruiting the best high school gymnast in the country. Allen has achieved the distinction four consecutive years.

It started with Jim Hartung, four years ago. Omaha South teammate Phil Cahoy was the No. 1 prep gymnast the next year. Jim Mikus of Reading, Pa., was No. 1 after Cahoy and Mike Bowers of Omaha Northwest was No. 1 last year.

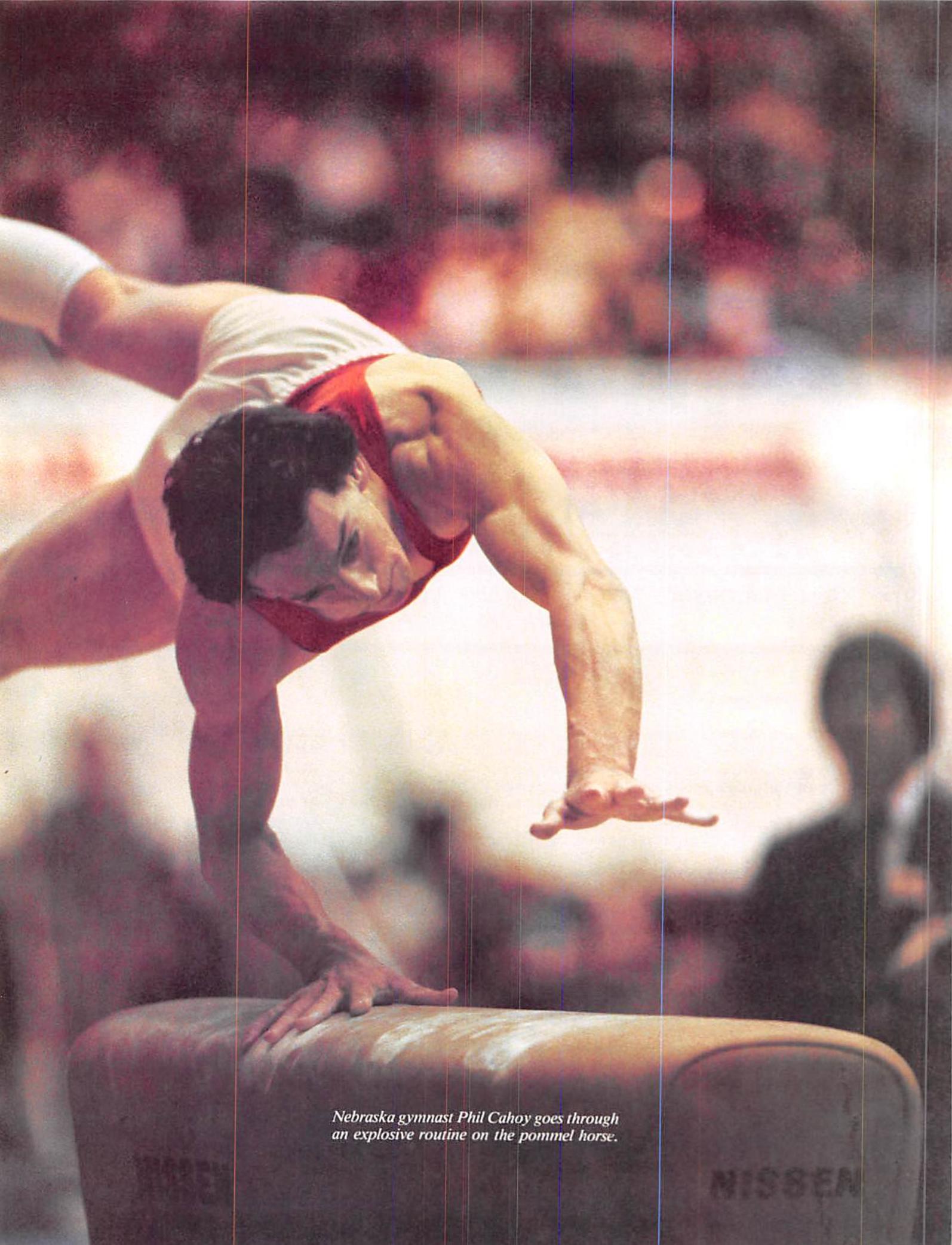
The string does not appear ready to snap. Although Allen still must outsell UCLA, he appears to be leading in the '82 recruiting race for Chris Riegel, the

nation's No. 1 ranked prep gymnast from Reading, Pa.

It doesn't take a Phi Beta Kappa to see the secret of Allen's success. Riegel will make his official Nebraska recruiting visit during the NCAA meet. Allen believes the event will recruit the athlete. The sights and sounds inside the Bob Devaney Sports Center, obvious recruiting benefits. If there are more enthusiastic gymnastic fans than Nebraska, they live on another continent.

"We're really proud of the crowd we've built up," Allen said. "Don't think it doesn't impress a gymnast to walk in our place and see 13,000 seats full. Every gymnast likes that kind of electricity, or he wouldn't be in the sport."

Nebraska gymnastics have come a long way since Allen and Jim Howard, his long-time pal and assistant coach, walked into the old NU Men's P.E. Building as Husker freshmen, two decades ago.



Nebraska gymnast Phil Cahoy goes through an explosive routine on the pommel horse.

NISSAN

"We didn't have any national reputations as athletes, but we worked our rear off as soon as we came to Nebraska in 1961," Howard recalled. "Nebraska gymnastics was five-days-a-week, six-months-a-year before we got here. Our freshman year, we made it a seven-day-a-week, 12-month-a-year program. We don't have any secrets. We just live in this gym. Consistency is the name of our game. We're consistent because we work hard."

The hard work demands a footnote. Nebraska gymnastic practices can be long, laborious affairs. But they're never dull. "We try not to make it a salt mine around here," Allen said. "We work hard every day, but our kids also have some fun. They never get tight. If you get tight, you don't perform. We like a serious, but loose atmosphere. And we like to carry our practices right into a meet. That philosophy has helped us concentrate under all kinds of conditions."

Lincoln Southeast's Larry Gerard started it all in 1975. "He was the turning point in our program," Allen said. "He wasn't the No. 1 high school gymnast in the nation. But he was one of the best. He could have gone anywhere he wanted to."

Gerard was an athlete in love with the sport. He could spend an entire day in the gym without losing interest — a blue-collar worker in a sophisticated sport.

"We like to recruit kids who can play and work at the same time," Howard said. "It's a good combination. I don't mind a kid being loose in practice, as long as he's able to compete when it's time."

Although Howard does not command the individual spotlight of his more ebullient partner, he complements Allen nicely.

"Each has his own style, and they both work," observed Hartung, who has his sights set on a third consecutive NCAA all-around championship.

With Allen and Howard, "it's almost like a good time versus hard work," Hartung said. "Francis is the good time. Howard is the hard work. It's 'want to' as opposed to 'do this.' That's not to say, though, that Francis won't make a gymnast work hard or Howard doesn't have a good time. Francis will bring out the best in you. So will Howard, whether you want him to or not."

Hartung considers himself a product of both coaches, Mikus and Cahoy are, for the most part, considered products of Allen. Scott Johnson is, in large part, the product of Howard.

Johnson, a junior from Colorado Springs, did not arrive at Nebraska with No. 1 credentials. He was more a case of No. 1 potential. "His explosiveness was obvious in high school," Allen said. "He just needed some smoothing out."

Nebraska has done the job in remarkable fashion. More than one gymnastics expert considers Johnson the foremost threat to Hartung's No. 1 status for the 1984 U.S. Olympic team.

"Scott's probably the reason I chose Nebraska over UCLA," Mikus said. "I couldn't believe how good he got in one year. I competed against him in the 1979 National Junior Olympics. I could see potential, but he was rough. Then, all of a sudden, in one year, he was great. I figured if Nebraska could do that with him, why couldn't they do that with me."

Mikus was another strategically courted recruit. His first visit to Nebraska coincided with Lincoln's first shot at hosting the NCAA. "The crowd was pretty awesome," he recalled. "But Francis and Howard were more important. I wasn't going to spend every day with the crowd, but I was going to spend every day with them."

The atmospheric conditions were dramatically different at Nebraska than UCLA. "Practices seemed so regimented at UCLA," Mikus said. "They just didn't seem to have as much fun working out as Nebraska guys did. Nebraska's humor definitely was a factor with me. Hartung was another factor. He draws people. So does Cahoy."

"I don't want to sound like I'm knocking UCLA. It's a nice school and they have a nice program," Mikus said. "They just can't match our facilities. I also think our coaches are more knowledgeable and adaptive to different people."

Mikus' endorsements are not propaganda. "Every national caliber gymnast who has ever visited Nebraska likes to work out here," Hartung said. "We have the best trainers, the best facilities and the best coaches in the country."

Riegel, the current prep plum, is a product of the same gymnastics school that produced Mikus. "I know there

are no guarantees in anything, but he's going to come here, too," Mikus said. "I can almost guarantee it."

Mikus feels likewise about Nebraska landing the nation's No. 2 ranked high school gymnast, Wes Suter of Reston, Va. "I've spent the past two summers with him," Mikus said. "He wants to come to Nebraska, too."

Hartung, the original magnet, is more than happy with the transfer of power. "Francis may be building a dynasty," he said. "I think if he gets Chris Riegel, Nebraska may have national championship teams for the next three or four years. Of course, that depends on everyone doing the job he's supposed to do. You can almost count on that. Nebraska gymnasts don't clutch."

Such a fact could be the battle cry of this year's team, bidding to become the second school in NCAA history to win four straight national championships. Illinois accomplished the trick in 1939, '40, '41 and '42.

"Barring injury, I see this team being the best gymnastics team in college history," Mikus said. "That's not bragging. That's just the way it is."

Hartung agrees. "It's only natural to feel like we're the best," he said. "We have six guys on our team with Olympic aspirations. We compete continuously, from September to April, among ourselves. That type of environment is bound to produce confidence and make it easier to compete."

"High-caliber gymnasts attract other high-caliber gymnasts," Hartung said. "That's why the best want to come here. They know they won't get anywhere with weaker competition. You can be the top dog, but if you're not pushed, you won't be the top dog for very long."

For Nebraska, the days of scrambling to recruit against the national powers are over. "The good gymnasts are scrambling to come here now," Hartung said. "In my opinion, Nebraska will never again have a poor gymnastics team. We're always going to be good. I'll be surprised if we ever drop out of the official top 10."

Allen likes the optimism, but tempers it with some realism. "I know we're going to lose the NCAA one of these days," he said. "It's going to happen. But we're not going to worry about it. We're going to enjoy the success we're having...and try to put together the best gymnastics crew ever assembled." ●





... scene repeats after week of the Husker defense lowered the boom on opposing quarterback. The back-to-back shutout of Florida State. Here Dave Womath stands over Stalldust, while returning NU broadouts (from left) Dave Fehlen, Jeff Merrell and Toby Williams join the celebration. (Photo by Dave Finn)

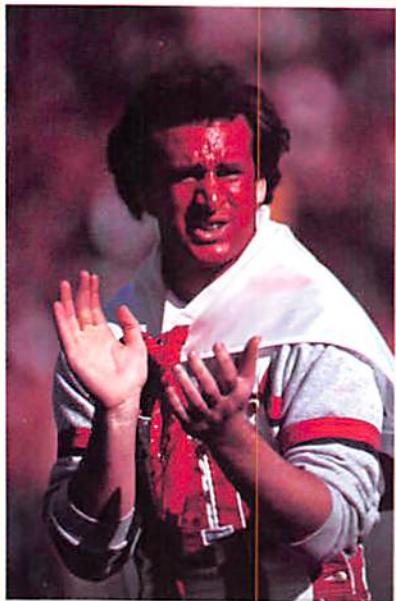


If you have questions or comments, you may write the
BIG RED MAILBAG
Box 83222
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

It was a great privilege and honor to be the winner of your drawing. We thoroughly enjoyed our trip to the Orange Bowl. It was something that we were able to enjoy that we wouldn't have been able to do ourselves. It was a great tour, and we met a lot of great people. I think you have a great magazine. Keep up the good work, and the Big Red will be back next year.

Leonard P. Frantz,
Emporia, Kan.



Dear Big Red Mailbag:

Thanks for a great year of coverage. Whatever happened to Jerry Murtaugh?

James Burtwistle
Wayne, Neb.

Dear Jerry:

An All-American linebacker and record-setting tackler for the 1970 national champions, is 33 now and an eight-year veteran conductor and brakeman for Union Pacific out of Omaha after scrapping initial plans to teach and coach. "Everything's going well for me," he said. Jerry maintains his interest in the Huskers but, he said, top priorities are his job; Bobbette, his bride as an NU sophomore; and Heather, 12; Ryan, 10; Rachel, 5, and Sean, 3. — ED.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

Thanks for printing the article I wrote. A lot of my friends in McCook called me about it. The only thing wrong was that you had my last name spelled wrong. It's Frank Freeman instead of Fruman. Everyone here, though, knew who it was.

Frank Freeman,
McCook, Neb.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

Your *Huskers Illustrated* is the most welcome, refreshing document that I receive during the long, dreary Nebraska winters. It's kind of like reading a garden catalogue during a blizzard.

Paul C. Andreas,
Omaha, Neb.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

Could you please tell me how a team that plays the No. 1 ranked and only undefeated team in the country, loses by one touchdown and then drops out of the Top 10 (AP poll; the only thing that kept us in the ninth spot in UPI is the two teams on probation)? Then the No. 2 team loses to the No. 8 team and only falls to fifth and sixth in the polls. This makes absolutely no sense to me.

Greg G. Jones
Lincoln, Neb.

Dear Greg:

Nor to us. — ED.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

When we moved to Minnesota, my whole family would stand tall when anyone would talk of Nebraska, especially me. When I changed schools, some people would tease me and make fun of Nebraska. I told them I was proud to be called a Cornhusker. Now that I live in California, I'm still proud of them, whether Nebraska is 0-11 or 11-0. Thank you, Nebraska.

Raymond Buhlmann
Mira Loma, Calif.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

My mementos and Nebraska collections are staggering. I'm 18 and a freshman at Arizona State, planning to transfer to Nebraska and do my best to contribute to the cause. I'm only 5-7, but I love Nebraska football so much, I must give it a try.

David Peterson
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

I am writing in hopes that if enough people complain about the uneven way the tickets for the Orange Bowl were distributed, something might be done. Why was Nebraska only allotted 12,000 tickets and Clemson got the rest?

Doris Kingsbury
Norfolk, Neb.

Dear Doris:

Each participating school was given 12,500 tickets for distribution. Because of their proximity to Miami and because it was apparent earlier that Clemson would be invited to the Orange Bowl, many Tiger fans were able to acquire tickets through Miami outlets. — ED.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

Just finished reading **Huskers Illustrated** word-for-word and cover-to-cover. It was great. Living out west in Nebraska, we aren't informed unless we order Omaha or Lincoln newspapers. **Huskers Illustrated** does this.

Ilo Fegler
Ogallala, Neb.

Dear Mr. Ash:

Thank you for the phone call last evening requesting Bryan's picture. It's on the way. We will be so proud to have our son, Bryan, featured in 'Huskers Illustrated' as a Nebraska Recruit. Several of our relatives and friends in Out State Nebraska receive the magazine and I know they will be happy to see Bryan also.

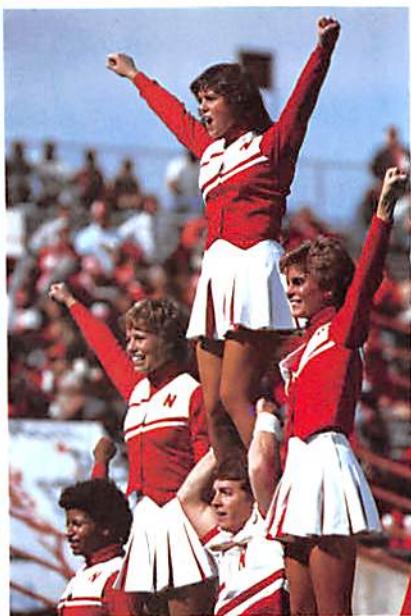
'Huskers Illustrated' is exactly the type of magazine Nebraska needs and deserves. We have so much to be proud of here in Nebraska. We also gave Bryan the 1980 Commemorative Wall Plaque, which is displayed proudly in his room.

Congratulations to you and your staff for the great job you're doing.

Mr. & Mrs. Al Siebler
Fremont, NE

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Siebler:

We're equally proud to have Bryan at Nebraska, and rest assured our readers will be seeing a lot more of Bryan on our pages in the future.



Big Red Mailbag:

I'd like to start off and congratulate you on your excellent work this past season, and I plan to renew my subscription for this fall. I enjoyed every issue, especially the predictions, Lockerroom chatter and the stats. Keep up the good work. Now, what I'm writing about is how I can go about getting the 1982 issue of the Nebraska football media guide. I don't know if you can help me, but I would appreciate it if you could. Again thanks for such a great publication on Nebraska football.

Gary Pettitt
Fremont, NE

Dear Gary:

We certainly appreciate your complimentary remarks, and we assure you we'll try to keep the magazine on the same great level as the Husker athletic program — second to none! As for the 1982 media guide, information can be obtained by contacting the Sports Information Department at the University of Nebraska, 116 Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, NE, 68588.

Dear Big Red Mailbag:

As I sat through the last seconds of the Orange Bowl game, I noticed that the helmets of the Huskers had red face masks. I know this was new, but was it done because the Huskers went to the Orange Bowl, or was it planned at the beginning of the year?

Tom Chase,
Houma, La.

Dear Tom:

Equipment Manager Glen Abbott and his staff gave the uniforms a special touch for the bowl game. It was a late decision. The players learned of the change when they dressed for the game. — ED.

I would like to take this time to extend a well deserved and a BIG RED congratulations to the Nebraska football team. I live in Iowa, where all I hear is "Go Cyclones" or "How 'Bout Them Hawks." I like the Hawks, but my heart belongs to Nebraska. I have always believed that "THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE NEBRASKA."

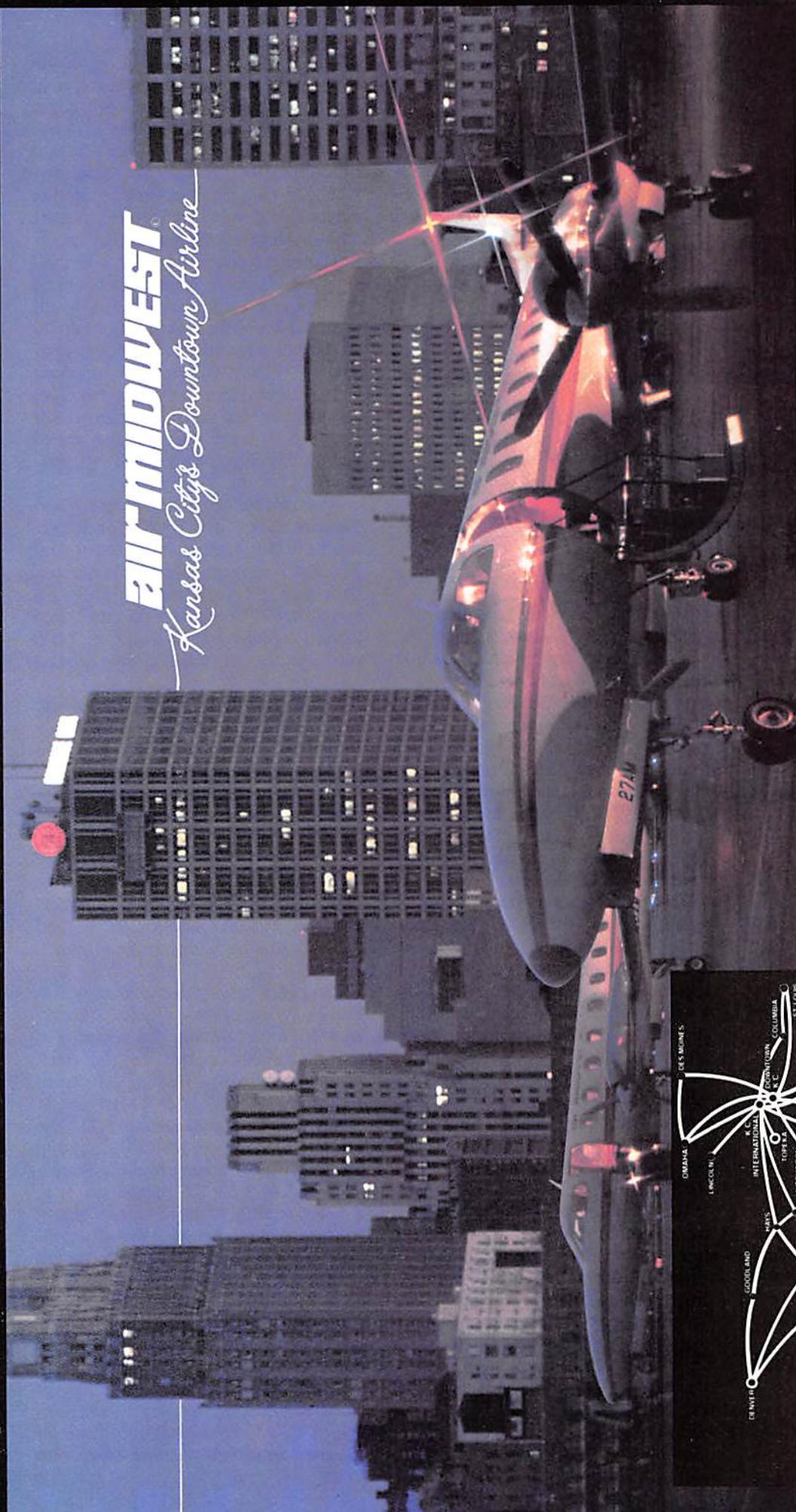
I'm looking forward to more years of Nebraska Cornhusker football. I wish them good luck next season, and maybe this time they won't come up 8 points shy of the whole load.

Mark Peterson
Lake City, Iowa





Roger Craig breaks tackles and fights for yardage against Oklahoma in a Nebraska romp. Craig will be back this fall, as will fellow I-Back Mike Rozier.



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National Recruiting Picture Clearing Up

North Carolina, Georgia, Penn State and Notre Dame grab early bragging rights among college football's major powers in blue chip chasing.

by Wayne Bishop

Nebraska and Texas signed another impressive contingent of linemen and linebackers. Oklahoma signed a handful of flying running backs. Notre Dame inked a trio of All-American linebackers and as many celebrated linemen. Penn State concentrated on linebackers, linemen and defensive backs. Pitt saved an All-American running back from Oklahoma, then added two of the nation's top quarterbacks and an All-American lineman or two.

The rich appear to still be getting richer. Southern Cal had quality, if not quantity. Georgia roamed the Southlands for the nucleus of what could be another national title club. And North Carolina signed more *Parade* All-Americans than anyone.

So just which school won the recruiting war in 1982? You probably won't know until 1984 or so. If then.

But it is apparent from the results through Feb. 22 (nearly two weeks after national signing day) that North Carolina, Georgia, Notre Dame, Penn State, Nebraska, Pitt, Southern Cal, Oklahoma, Texas, Texas A&M, Ohio State, Purdue, Michigan, Louisiana State, Kansas, Missouri, Alabama, Tennessee, Auburn and Arkansas all came away from the exhausting labors with more to show for all the time, travel and effort than most of the rest of the pack in the upper echelon of college football.

After national championships by Georgia and Clemson the past two

seasons, North Carolina's recruiting haul is nothing to be laughed at. The Tar Heels have been close to a national title themselves these past two seasons.

Among the blue chippers signed by NC this year are tight end Arnold Franklin (6-foot-4, 227 pounds) of Cincinnati, celebrated running back Walter Bailey of Hampton, Va.; linemen Dennis Barron of Wilson, N.C., and Bill Viggers of Icard, N.C. (6-4, 235 and 6-5, 275) and a host of local talent that should bode ill for the rest of the Atlantic Coast Conference in years to come.

Recruiting in the Southeast Conference was about as balanced as it has been in a long, long time. But them 'Dogs' folks in Georgia are always talking about, appear to be licking their lips while thinking about the future more than anyone else.

Why? Georgia signed five off Joe Teranova's *Nifty Fifty*. Among those was Danville, Va., quarterback Jamie Harris, a 6-1, 185-pounder who can do it all. And the Bulldogs stole into North Carolina to snare one of the top defensive backs around in Anthony Flack of Greensboro, a youngster who had 29 career interceptions. John Little, a quarterback from Panama City, Fla., with so many similarities to Harris that it's almost spooky, also threw his hat into the North Carolina ring.

Inside the state of Georgia, in what is regarded as a very fine year for grid talent, the Dogs tied down 10 of the top 14 blue chippers.

Among the most heralded is Gerald

Browner of Atlanta, the most recent in the Browner line. But there is speculation that he will not be eligible to play. Browner, a 6-5, 305 block of granite, transferred to Woodward Academy, then quit the team the week before the playoffs and went back to his former school. Things are still up in the air.

There is no doubt, however, about the ability of George Smith, a booming fullback type (or linebacker, if you will) at 6-2, 230, who also inked with Georgia. Add running back Keith Montgomery of Toccoa (6-2, 190) and All-American wide receiver Herman Archie (6-4, 200) and you have the start of quite an offense for years to come. Georgia also signed tackles Jay Floyd (6-5, 250) off Teranova's list and Victory Perry.

Alabama did steal into Georgia to sign Vincent Elder, a 6-3, 220 linebacker rated the No. 4 player in the state. And Tommy Sims became one of 10 quarterbacks to sign with Tennessee, leaving his home state in Georgia to Volunteer. Ben Logue, a running back with over 3,000 yards, went even further north, heading for Michigan.

The best of those signal callers signed by Tennessee is thought to be Tony Robinson of Tallahassee, Fl. Robinson was perhaps the most celebrated of all the prep slingers this past year.

Auburn stole a bit of Bama's thunder when the Tigers convinced Alan Evans of Enterprise to run from their wishbone, not the Bear's. In fact, for the first time in the memory of many Barnans, Auburn won more head-on battles with the Crimson Tide than it lost.

Noteables among those battles was Patrick Washington, a quick quarterback from Mobile who was regarded as the top wishbone type in the state. Alabama settled for Rodney Jarman of Florence.

Auburn also signed Decatur, Ga., line prize Jeff Neighbors and a diamond in the rough type running back in Vincent Jackson. A 6-2, 215 multi-sport star, Jackson recently set three state records in four events that he entered in the state indoor track meet. One was the 60-yard dash mark set by Harvey Glance (6.1). Jackson also high jumped 6-foot-7. He could wind up being the best in a long line of great Auburn wishbone backs — that is if Evans doesn't beat him to it.

As for Alabama, there is no need for tears. Wes Neighbors, the All-American son of an All-American (Bob) committed early and stuck with the Tide. John

Hand did the same. Vinson Elder from Decatur could be a great one.

Tennessee added a highly touted juco from Huntington Beach, Ca., in Sam Atella and also signed Oakland quarterback Tim Norton. Florida's biggest coup was the signing of John Williams, the A-A runner from Palatka who is 6-1, 195 and slightly slower than an F-104.

Mississippi State likes defensive lineman Pat Swoops of Florence, Al., while Kentucky came up with All-American tackle Joe Prince and Mike Whittaker, a quarterback from Hyden. Mississippi stayed mostly at home, inking a couple of fine ones in Mike Portis (6-2, 220) and Dean Brown (6-0, 185 quarterback).

Louisiana State fans let out a deep sigh of relief Feb. 22 when Gary James finally ended the suspense and signed with the Bayou Bengals. The 6-foot, 190 flyer was pursued hotly by Oklahoma and Texas before home pride finally won out. He's ranked in a class with Marcus Dupree, Anthony Byerly, Kevin Wilhite and Ray Wallace by most recruiters.

At press time Alabama and others were still battling LSU for standout linebacker Scott Bailey and dashing running back Reggie Dupard.

But the boys from Baton Rouge did sign running back Dalton Hilliard, who had a great senior season at Patterson, La., and Carl Bernard, a defensive back from Baton Rouge. Both are 5-11, 185. Carl Wilson at 6-5, 227 and Archie Sutton at 6-5, 240 are two of the top linemen signed by LSU, which got a late commitment from Merritt Island, Fla., quarterback Jeff Wickersham (6-2, 190).

Jeff Brignac of Metairie, La., and quarterback Bryan Broadis of Dallas are also high on the Tiger totem pole.

Elsewhere in the South, Clemson took advantage of its Cinderella season to sign running back Steve Griffin of Pineville, N.C. (5-11, 180) and West Virginia was boasting of linemen David Griffin of South Charleston (6-5, 255) and Scott Saylor of Whitehall, Pa., (6-5, 245). Florida State signed wide receiver Hassan Jones of Clearwater, Fl., and the 6-2, 197 jet should keep the aerial game going for a while in Tallahassee. Georgia, looking hard for receivers, also liked the looks of Tyrone Sorrells of Buford, a 6-5, 205-pounder.

At the top of the Eastern half of the country, Penn State and Pitt are both

thumping their chests a bit.

The Panthers, despite the last-minute defection of head coach Jackie Sherrill to Texas A&M, still had enough punch left to get two of the nation's premier offensive performers. Quarterback Rich Bowen (6-3, 190) is in the Marino Mold, and Matt Stennett (6-1, 185) was one of the keys to Oklahoma's recruiting year — and he stayed at home to play halfback for the Panthers instead of quarterback for the Sooners.

While Bowen is the most publicized quarterback Pitt signed, John Congemi of Ft. Lauderdale, Fl., is a potential star at 6-1, 178. He turned down Alabama and Michigan. Also heading north for the fall from Florida will be lineman Andrew Lewis (6-4, 270). Tim Jones, a 6-5, 270 giant from Akron, Ohio, is Pitt bound.

The Nittany Lions aren't lyin' when they say they struck it rich this year. Following a banner season and an impressive thumping of Southern Cal in post-season play, Joe Paterno's squad bolstered its chances for 1982 (and 83 and 84 and 85) with some big name players.

Among the best are New Jersey lineman Tom Wilk (6-4, 245), Ohioan Ed Boone of Cleveland (6-7, 250), defensive back Chris Collins of Chartier Valley (6-3, 190), linebacker Bob White of Freeport (6-3, 222), fullback Steve Smith (6-2, 200) and mercury-footed Sid Lewis of Canton, Ohio (6-1, 180 running back and wide receiver).

Rolling along into Big Ten Country, Purdue has to be given credit for perhaps the most efficient use of energy. The Boilermakers went in all directions to get some of the nation's best.

Derek Wimberly, the A-A from Miami, Fl., who committed to Oklahoma Tuesday afternoon and then Florida Tuesday night, finally used the right hand on his 6-5, 230 body to sign with Purdue. Then Wallace, the Indianapolis flyer thought to be locked for Notre Dame, said he'd take Purdue, too. And the Boilermakers made it an even nicer week when they went to the West Coast to sign wide receiver Albert Bell, one of the top 15 in the Pac 10 area.

"We thought we were going to get Wallace," said Notre Dame recruiting coordinator Brian Boulac. "He's awfully good. And Purdue got Wimberly and Bob Ziltz of Chicago. Nobody had a super year in the Big 10.

Ohio State got a couple of real good ones and so did Michigan."

Ohio State's biggest claim to fame this year in recruiting is Roman Bates of Memphis, Tn., a 6-0, 195 flash. In the same class with Bates is halfback Keith Byars of Dayton, Ohio (6-2, 215). Bob Maggs (6-4, 260) is regarded as one of the best line prospects in the nation, and he'll be a Buckeye in the fall after graduating from Youngstown Cardinal Mooney. Notre Dame coveted Maggs, also.

Add to the Ohio State list linebacker Tom Johnson of Detroit (6-3, 215) and you have the kind of recruiting year that smirks of success galore in the future.

Michigan hopes hinge around stars like Paul Jokisch, 6-8, 215 tight end from Birmingham, Mi., and fullback Dan Rice (6-2, 225) of West Roxbury, Mass. Kicker Pat Moons of Ft. Lauderdale was accorded the highest honors in the country, while the Wolverines also like the looks of wide receiver Gil Johnson of Detroit (6-3, 200).

Tom Wilcher of Detroit is a 5-10, 185 runner that Michigan fans are eager to see in blue and gold. And Mark Hammerstein of Wapakoneta, Oh., is a 6-4, 250 line standout.

Other Big 10 signings of note include Jim Juriga of Wheaton, Ill., to Illinois; Ivan Zubar, 6-4, 230 end from Richfield, Mn., to the Golden Gophers; lineman Bryan Ward of Darien, Ill., to Illinois (he's 6-5, 275); and quarterback David Yarema (6-2, 180 out of Birmingham, Mich.) to Michigan State. The Spartans also got wide receiver Preston Gray of Louisville, Ky. (6-3, 187).

Even though Notre Dame suffered some late setbacks, the Fighting Irish came through for the second straight year with a bumper crop of blue chippers.

For example: tackle John Askin, 6-6, 250, of Cincinnati Moeller; tackle Shawn Heffern, 6-5, 220, of Carmel, In.; tackle Ron Plantz, 6-4, 240, of Chicago; wide receiver Milt Jackson of Fairfield, Ia. (younger brother of Iowa's Treye Jackson and 6-0, 185); kicker Hal Von Wyl of Stow, Oh.; and linebackers (All-Americans, all) Rick DiBernardo (6-3, 214) of Huntington Beach, Ca., Tony Furjanic (6-1, 215) of Chicago and Ron Weisenhofer (6-3, 210) of Chicago.

Gerry Faust also signed running back Allen Pinkett of Sterling, Va., a 5-10, 180 speed back. And he got lineman Jim Jerga of North Wheaton, Ill., at

6-5, 250.

In the Big Eight Conference Nebraska came away with the usual Cornhusker type linemen and Oklahoma added to its stable of running backs with the likes of Dupree, Tulsa's Spencer Tillman, Earl Johnson of Dallas and Matt Pierson of Terrell, Tx. Tom Haley, a sprinter from Monroeville, Pa., also is bound for Norman.

Nebraska's top prizes included blue chippers (nationally) like tight end Bob Bowen of Omaha (6-3, 225), linebacker Brad Tyrer (6-3, 200) of Kansas City and quarterback Pernell Gatsos (5-10, 170) of Omaha. But All-American linebacker Larry Station of Omaha opted for Iowa and the Big 10 defending champs.

Missouri has a spot in the backfield for Eric Drain (6-2, 205) of Germantown, Md., with Santio Barbosa of Oxon Hill, Md., also coming to terms with the Tigers. Kansas fans are whooping it up over successes like Dave Geroux of Huntington Beach, Ca., and linebacker Darnell Williams (6-3, 210) of Kansas City. Both were on everyone's starting list.

Colorado had a close call, but kept A-A linebacker Barry Remington (6-4, 220) at home. Richard Estell of Kansas City is a wide receiver on the blue chip list and is headed for Kansas, while Oklahoma State went east to Washington, D.C. for All-American defensive back Denise Williams (6-2, 188). Tony Berry, all-star defensive back from East St. Louis, Ill., is due to be a Jayhawk in Lawrence next season.

Oklahoma added one of the nation's premier defensive players in James Lee of Ft. Worth, a 6-4, 235 end with 4.4 speed in the 40. And the Sooners helped themselves in the standup defensive positions.

Texas is no stranger to the Southwest Conference boasting rights each February, and this year was no different.

The Horns hooked the likes of All-Everything linebacker Ty Allert (6-3, 215) and blue chip backer James McKinney (6-4, 235). Then they added the top running back in Texas in Newton's Anthony Byerly, who picked UT over Nebraska at the end of a hot battle.

But the real power of this Longhorn recruiting class is again the line. Tight end Blake Brawner and tackles Johnny Kip Cooper, Todd Parks, Gene

Chilton, Bruce Blackmar, Rich Houston, Steve Eargle, Terry Steelhammer and Billy Todd (6-3x230, 6-3x220, 6-3x220, 6-2x240, 6-4x245, 6-3x230, 6-5x215, 6-5x230, 6-4x220 and 6-4x232) are all man mountains.

But there is always enough talent in Texas to go a long way for everyone. And the rest of the pack took advantage.

Texas A&M, even with the late start, came close to matching the Horns in productivity among the blue chip stock. The Aggies will salute such standouts

But there is always enough talent in Texas to go a long way for everyone. And the rest of the pack took advantage.

as quarterback Kevin Murray of Dallas, running back Jimmy Hawkins (6-0, 190) of San Antonio (many feel he is as good or better than Byerly), wide receiver Jeff Bolton (6-3, 170) of South Garland, split end Shea Walker (6-0, 170) of Port Arthur, tackle Gary Rogers of Dallas (6-5, 225) and three other linemen on the Top 60 list (of the Houston Chronicle).

Texas Christian shocked a few folks with the late breakthroughs on quarterback Thomas Ledet of Houston, running back Anthony White of Fort Bend, receiver Keith Burnett of Houston, linebacker Gerald Taylor of Dallas and safety Egypt Allen of Dallas. But the Horned Frogs were shut out once more in top line talent.

Baylor won rights for two top quarterbacks in Tom Muecke of Angleton and Cody Carlson of San Antonio, but the Bears were burned elsewhere on the top 60 list. SMU started off great, but lost some key operatives when Ron Meyer departed for the pros. Still, Arthur Allen is a great running back and Craig Kennington (6-5, 230) is one of the best linemen in the Lone Star State. Defensive back Cornelius Dozier of Dallas probably won't make up for the loss of Egypt Allen and Gerald Taylor.

Houston has apparently snuck through the pack with another great season. When the Cougars signed Raymond Tate of Minter, La., they added

the offensive firepower (if they can keep the 6-2, 210 dynamo in school) they badly needed at running back.

Already in the fold for UH when Tate signed were such Texas standouts as Jeffery Fields, 6-3, 185 wide receiver out of Houston Yates; Carl Hilton, 6-4, 200 tight end from Galveston; linebacker Sebastian Harris (6-2, 215) of Houston Yates; and line prizes T.J. Turner (6-4, 240) of Lufkin, Eddie Gilmore (6-3, 260) of Houston Yates and Dale Hubert (6-3, 230) of South Houston.

Notre Dame went to Texas to sign tight end Wally Kleine of Midland, and he's a mere 6-8, 240. Also leaving the state will be tackle Joe Goebel of Midland. He's 6-7, 250 and loved it at UCLA.

While Texas Tech didn't do all that well in Texas, the Red Raiders did land New Mexico All-American running back Tim Smith of Hobbs.

Further west, Southern Cal took away a prized almost-possession of Washington when the Trojans inked tackle Jim Fitzpatrick (6-8, 260) of Beaverton, Or. He could play right away at USC or anywhere.

But Southern Cal didn't stop there. They got Bruce Parks (6-5, 255) of Ontario, Ca., and linebackers Ron Brown (6-4, 200) of LaPuente, Ca., and Kennedy Pola (6-2, 215) of Santa Ana. Notre Dame came close on that one.

The Long Beach Times newspaper polled the Pac-10 coaches and came up with the top 15 prospects in the area. Southern Cal got Fitzpatrick, linemen Jeff Bregel, Pola, Aaron Brown and Parks. Oregon signed the top running back in Wilhite, a cousin to Gale Sayres Kansas and Chicago Bears fame. Wilhite rushed for 4,901 career yards and scored 72 touchdowns, using his 9.3 speed in the 100 to do it.

Arizona State notched Greg Battle and quarterback Dale Suer, while Washington (which also thought it was going to get Wilhite) signed Tim Peoples. The only UCLA signee of the top 15 was Jim McCullough.

ASU also signed running back Darryl Clack of Security, Co., a 5-11, 170 scooter. Oregon got quarterback Todd Anderson of Lake Oswego, Ore., and San Diego State grabbed off one of the nation's best prospects with the pass in Jim Plum of LaMesa, Ca. Matt Stevens of Fountain Valley, Ca., went with UCLA. Wide receiver Glenn Dennard of Tempe, Az., stayed with ASU. ●

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FCA Conferences Begin 1982 Run In June

Participation in Fellowship of Christian Athletes camps has come a long way since the first meeting at Estes Park in 1956.

The first of a dozen national conferences sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes will be held June 7-11, kicking off a busy summer of conferences and sports camps.

"Compete for the Crown" is the theme of the 1982 conferences, which are held for high school and college boys at sites ranging from the Association Camp at Estes Park, Co., to Honolulu, Hawaii. There will also be 12 conferences during the summer for high school and college girls, plus five sports camps at the National Conference Center in Marshall, In., and four coaches conferences in four different sites.

The FCA is a national organization which combines the spirit of competition with the spirit of God, striving to use the examples set by athletes and their coaches to win over young people and adults to Christianity.

To be eligible for enrollment in one of the conferences, the boy or girl must be in high school or college as of September, 1982, and should be: 1, a church member, or willing to talk to a pastor or priest about becoming one; 2, a member of a recognized school athletic squad (although neither athletic prowess nor prominence is important other than the manner in which they contribute to leadership potential); and, 3, concerned about achieving academic potential.

The first national conference was held in the summer of 1956 when Don McLanen reserved space in the YMCA camp at Fort Estes to host 500 coaches and athletes for a four-day meeting. Branch Rickey, Doak Walker, Bob Richards and Otto Graham were among the speakers at that first conference. Fewer than 100 pre-registered, bringing about fears that the meeting would be a disaster.

But the opening session drew 256, including Bill Krisher and Clendon Thomas of Oklahoma as group leaders. Rickey, the owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team who was so instrumental in getting the FCA off the ground, gave the opening address. In it he gave his ideas on the purpose of the organization.

"The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is not a physical conditioning process...it is a cooperative grouping of active athletes to embrace and have others embrace Jesus as the Christ, the measure of divinity through which we come to

know and find God. It is an effort that challenges our best intelligence and all our emotions inside us. We must proceed to the task with conviction, with contriteness, and with courage even to the point of ardor." (Quoted from the book, *Sharing The Victory*, by Joseph Dunn.)

The conferences, of course, have grown in number, size and stature since that beginning in 1956. The men's conferences will be held at Estes Park, No. 1 Black Mountain (N.C.) and Honolulu June 7-11; No. 2 Black Mountain and No. 1 Marshall June 14-18; Shippensburg, Pa., and Waco, Tx., June 21-25; Stillwater, Ok., and Holland, Mi., July 19-23; Northfield, Mn., July 26-30; and Fresno, Ca., and Marshall Aug. 2-6.

Conferences for the young women will be held June 7-11 at Fort Collins, Co., and Honolulu; June 21-25 at Gettysburg, Pa., and Waco, Tx.; July 5-9 at Marshall; July 12-16 at No. 4 Black Mountain; July 19-23 at Enid, Ok.; July 26-30 at Northfield, Mn.; Aug. 2-6 at Fresno, Ca.; and Aug. 9-13 at Marshall.

The sports camps are all held at the National Conference Center in Marshall, In., and include boys football, June 21-25; boys basketball, June 28 through July 2; girls basketball, July 12-16; girls volleyball, tennis and track, July 19-23; and boys soccer, July 26-30.

In addition, there will be coaches' conferences held June 7-11 at Granby, Co., at the YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch; June 18-20 at Marshall; and July 5-9 at No. 3 Black Mountain and at Lake George, N.Y.

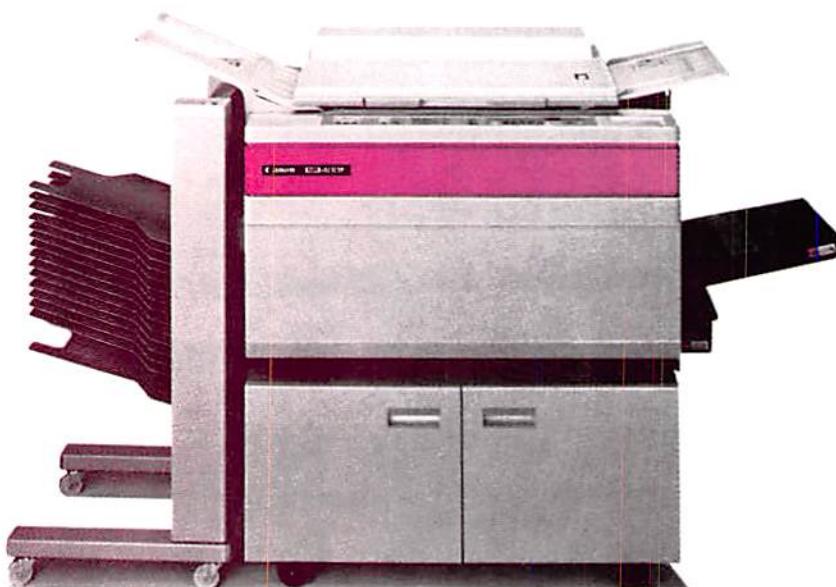
The Huddle Officers Leadership Conference will be held June 7-11 at Marshall.

The staffs at the meetings include many of the country's top Christian coaches and professional and college athletes, plus the FCA's specially trained leadership staff of coaches and college athletes.

Those wishing additional information on cost and enrollment procedure should contact their local school FCA officials, or write to the Conference Registrar, FCA, 8701 Leeds Road, Kansas City, Mo., 64129. The telephone number at the national office in Kansas City is 816-921-0909. For information on the Hawaii conferences write to David Horne, 2141 Lauula Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96815.●

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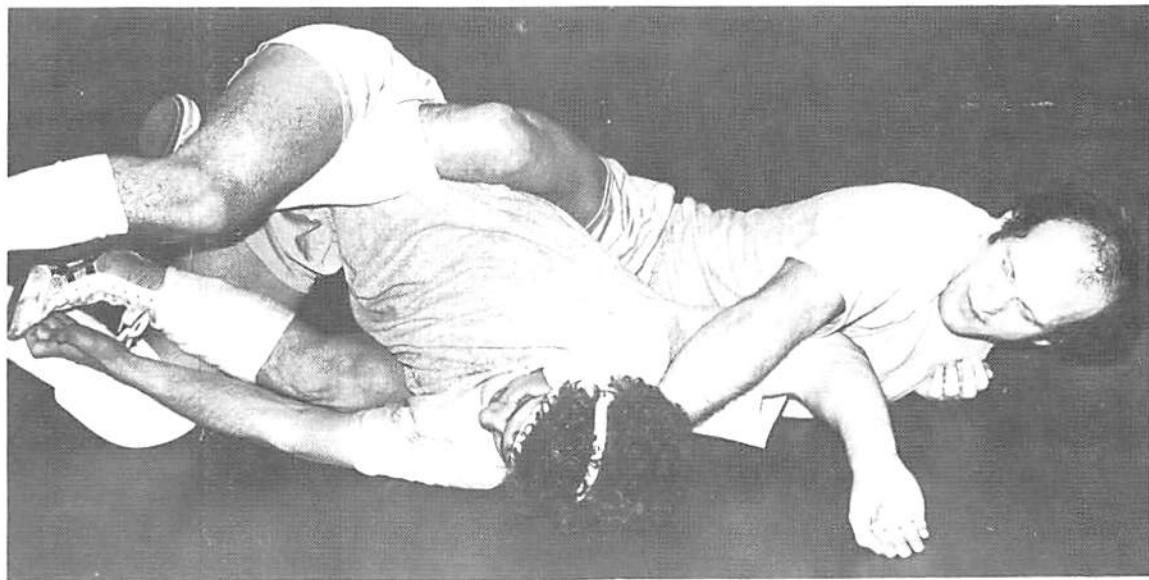
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Bob Fehrs gets involved in his coaching.

Fehrs Has Nebraska's Mat Program On The Move

Neighborhood bullies no longer regard Nebraska as a breather.

By Tom Ash

Bob Fehrs works at his job, no question. He has the lumps and bruises to prove it.

At 37, Fehrs, the Nebraska wrestling coach still rolls around the mat with athletes in their teens and early 20s, working up a sweat in daily workouts.

While such demonstrations are no doubt significant in the dramatic improvement in the Cornhusker wrestling room, Fehrs' efforts in recruiting are more telling.

"College athletics always come back to recruiting," Fehrs said.

For instance, when Fehrs arrived at Nebraska four years ago, the Huskers were a perennial last among the six Big Eight schools fielding teams. His first team had four starters in 10 weight classes who had not even placed in their high school state tournaments.

Now Fehrs has state champions at all weights except 150, and that spot is

manned by Billy Selmon, who was fourth in the junior college nationals.

Fehrs was a two-time national prep champion in Pennsylvania, a three-time Big 10 champ at Michigan and a three-time NCAA runner-up. He knew success would not come quickly or easily.

His first two Nebraska teams remained sixth in the Big Eight, but the groundwork was neatly laid. His 1980 team moved to fourth and broke into the national top 20, finishing 14th and 17th. Johnnie Selmon at 134 pounds became Nebraska's first Big Eight champion since Jim Raschke in 1962 and was named the meet's outstanding wrestler.

This January, Nebraska wrestling reached another milestone when it broke into the national top 10 for the first time, reaching sixth in one poll and ninth in another.

Trouble is, Iowa, Iowa State, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State — the

top four — are "unfortunately still head and shoulders above the rest of the country. Having three of them in our conference makes it very tough," Fehrs said. "We've beaten the WAC (Western Athletic Conference) champion (BYU) soundly the last two years. We could be in the WAC and people would think we were wonderful," Fehrs said.

Going nose to nose with the neighborhood bullies "is a double-edged sword," Fehrs said. "When you go recruiting, the good people are anxious to wrestle against the best. The other side of it is, we haven't been able to beat them. But for the first time, those teams aren't blowing us away. Here's proof we're doing it."

"We've changed the perspective of our competition in the last 1 to 1½ years. The first two years, without exception, they would put in three or four different guys or move up in weight against us. We were one of the

Wrestling



Bob Fehrs works another hold on freshman Tim Deaver. One of the keys to the NU mat coach's success has been his ability to demonstrate on the mat.

breathers on their schedule. Now they want their starting team in the lineup against us."

The Huskers are "at least two years away" from seriously challenging for the Big Eight and national championships, Fehrs said. "Right now, we have a very good nucleus. We only have two seniors.

Last year, the Huskers were weak in the lower and upper weight classes. This year's team has been solid except for the lighter weights. Senior Johnny Selmon (142), junior Ray Oliver (167), sophomore twins Jim (177) and Bill Scheer (190) and freshman heavyweight Gary Albright "have definitely carried the load," Fehrs said.

Fehrs landed the Selmons from Grand Rapids, Mich., J.C. because their coach was a friend and they knew they could wrestle immediately at Nebraska.

"We were lucky with the Scherrs," Fehrs said, because Mobridge, S.D., was not a hotspot on the recruiting trail. "We went after them real hard,

not knowing how good they were. After they signed with us, Bill won the national juniors and Jim was fourth. We grabbed them before people found out how good they were."

Fehrs recruited Oliver out of Omaha Tech but lost him to Arizona State, where Oliver's brother, Roye, was a standout. Ray transferred after his brother graduated, sat out one season and "has improved 30 percent over last year."

Albright, a 325-pounder who is ranked fourth nationally in Greco-Roman wrestling, opted for Nebraska over Oklahoma and Oklahoma State because he was more comfortable with the surrounding and facilities. Albright also was a Husker "find" because "Montana isn't known for providing great wrestlers," Fehrs said. Albright is from Billings.

Being rated in the top 10, Fehrs said, "is extremely important to us from the publicity standpoint. We can send that ammunition to recruits. The margin between the top four and us is less now." •



Mitch Krenk carries a Sooner tackler with him as he dives into the end zone for a touchdown in the Huskers' win at Oklahoma.

Baseball

CONTINUED FROM 20

Mason, plus speedy Dave Bailor, from Connellsville, Pa., by way of Murray State Junior College.

In that quartet, "we've got some speed, some power and some singles," said Sanders.

In his first season with the Cornhuskers, last year, Hill established school records for triples (8) and total bases (123), batting .331 with nine home runs and a team-leading 58 runs-batted-in. He also stole 24 bases. "Rober combines power with speed," Sanders said.

Bright, who was drafted by the Kansas City Royals out of Munford High School in Detroit, hit .258 with 12 doubles and 19 RBIs for the Cornhuskers last season. Mason, a sophomore, hit .229.

Nebraska's winter roster also included outfielders Jim Jeffries, a former Husker football player, North Platte freshman Randy Smidt, and sophomore Bill Hendricks, whose primary role will be as a left-handed designated hitter.

Hendricks hit .347 and drove in 26 runs in that capacity last season.

Another potential designated hitter is senior Mark Mauer, who was the offensive captain and a quarterback on Nebraska's Big Eight championship football team. Mauer was drafted by the Minnesota Twins out of St. Paul, Minn., Harding High School, but hasn't played baseball since.

When Nebraska returned from its Orange Bowl game with national champion Clemson, Mauer traded in his shoulder pads for a bat and catcher's mitt, determined to earn a position on Sanders' team.

"I just about tried to talk him out of it," said Sanders, whose policy is to give anyone who wants it a chance. "I didn't want Mark to be embarrassed. But that's the most unreal story yet."

Mauer wasn't embarrassed. Quite the contrary. He showed he could still swing a bat in addition to retaining his skills as a catcher, and he'll be part of a catching corps which includes Amaya and juniors Nick Richards and Mark Reimers. ●



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Inside

Husker Sports

Huskers Illustrated subscribers chose sophomore quarterback Turner Gill as the most valuable football player last fall. The Fort Worth, Tex., youngster who emerged from the pack to lead the Big Eight championship drive, won in the balloting by a comfortable margin over Outland Trophy-winning center, Dave Rimington. Mike Rozier and Roger Craig, who shared the I-back spot, appropriately tied for third.

Carl Bentz's resurgent swimmers used dual victories over nationally-ranked Cal-Berkeley and Iowa to break into the national Top 20 for the first time in Husker history. "The top teams we have competed against this year have certainly raised our level of expectation," Bentz said. "We recruited for this season with one goal in mind, to make an impact on the national level."

Footballers Mike Rozier (sprints), Roger Craig (hurdles) and Irving Fryar (sprints) are out for indoor track. "They call us the three stooges," Craig said.

Gary Albright, Nebraska's 320-pound freshman wrestler, offers this endorsement of redshirted sophomore offensive lineman Harry Grimmering of Grand Island: "Harry's crazy; I wouldn't want to mess with him." Harry is easy to recognize on frigid afternoons late in the season. He's the one with the burr haircut running post-practice laps without a shirt on. He also may be the first Cornhusker ever to be ejected from the two redshirt-freshmen intrasquad games in the same season.

Sprinter Jennie Gorham has returned to Nebraska after a 1½ year absence. Jennie left after her freshman year with the Huskers, spent part of a semester at Cal State-Long Beach and two semesters at the University of Missouri before returning to the fold. Despite the sojourn, "I'm not a spur-of-the-moment person like most people think I am," she said.

Junior College transfer Terry Smith was a pleasant surprise for NU Basketball Coach Moe Iba this season. Smith arrived with solid credentials; he was an honorable mention JC All-American and averaged over 20 points per game in two seasons at Moberly, Mo., Junior College. But he started slowly this season and didn't earn a chance to start until midway through the Big Eight schedule. His basketball career started slowly, too. He didn't begin playing organized ball until he was a junior in high school. Before that, he said, "I was really terrible."

Basketball guard Handy Johnson learned the game on the playgrounds of Chicago, competing against the neighborhood likes of Isiah Thomas, Mark Aquirre, Ronnie Lester and Skip Dillard, all notable hoop names. The player Johnson would most like to emulate? "Handy Johnson," he said.

Cornhusker pole vaulter Mark Newton, a classy Californian who holds the school indoor record at 17-6, will complete his eligibility with the NCAA indoor championships.

Assistant Track Coach Dick Railsback, a former world-class vaulter at UCLA, missed the indoor opener at East Tennessee State because of the 4 a.m. arrival of Michelle, the first offspring for Dick and Annika after 11 years of marriage. The Husker field events boss and his Swedish wife never got around to it before because "we traveled so much," he said.

Trainer George Sullivan spent a delightful afternoon at the Husker Orange Bowl headquarters reminiscing with Keith Gardner, the "Jamaican Jet" of the 1950s who was the first in a steady stream of great Jamaicans to perform for Frank Sevignes's track teams. Keith, a 1956 Olympian, still holds Nebraska's 220 record at 20.4, is tied for first in the 60 highs and is second in the 120 highs. Keith is the physical education director for the Miami Parks and Recreation Department. Keith Jr., 14, was along for the visit.

Nebraska and New Mexico State agreed to switch their football date next fall from Sept. 18 to Sept. 4. NMS would get an additional \$25,000 and Nebraska would get a game under its belt before its originally scheduled opener against stronger Iowa. That arrangement also would leave an open date for extra time to prepare for perennial power Penn State. It would have been a slick move for the Huskers. NMS, however, couldn't get Texas-El Paso to change a date to make it possible, so it will be Iowa in the opener, Sept. 11, followed by New Mexico State, Sept. 18 and Penn State, Sept. 25.

Falls City native Tim Wilson was the first graduate of a new UNL curriculum to prepare strength coaches for their profession. Tim, who had been assistant to Strength Coach Boyd Epley, then became the 11th Epley aide in eight years to move on to a head job when he took over the program at Nevada-Las Vegas.

Devaney: Rodgers Ordeal, "Hardest Thing I've Done"

Decision over Huskers' most gifted athlete was agonizing for most celebrated coach

Excerpt from the book Devaney by Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney, as told to Mike Babcock, Don Bryant, Virgil Parker and Randy York. Available (\$9.95 plus applicable city and state sales tax) through Huskers Illustrated P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68501.

I may be wrong, but I'm betting that people are more interested in what I have to say about Johnny Rodgers than anything else I mention in the book. It's only natural. John was the best player I ever coached. He's the only Heisman Trophy winner we've ever had. And he's probably the most controversial athlete you'll ever see around here.

I know people are curious to hear my views on the gas station robbery and all that stuff. But I feel more comfortable starting "The Johnny Rodgers Story" where it begins — when we first started recruiting him out of Omaha Tech. We knew even then that John was a great talent. You could tell on film that he had a tremendous ability to run with the football and a tremendous ability to catch it. He was more of a running back in high school.

We never took John for granted. We knew some of the powers would try to go into Omaha for a player like him. When we heard how interested USC was, we decided to recruit John as hard as you recruit anybody.

John's real father lived in California, so that was a concern. We felt we needed some extra help in Omaha, so we talked to Everett Alger. He was very influential in helping us recruit John. He stayed in touch with Rodgers and lined up a summer job for him.

When he finally signed his letter of intent, we were happier than we'd ever been about an in-state recruit. The

Shrine Bowl game that summer reinforced what we already knew — John could catch better than anyone and run with just about anyone. Even though he was an I-back as a freshman, we envisioned him as a great wingback.



Johnny Rodgers

Obviously, we weren't wrong. John was probably the best wingback college football has ever seen, and it may be a long time before we see another one like him.

Anyone who watched John Rodgers play football, basketball or baseball in high school knew what kind of an athlete he was. When he got to Nebraska, he was an immediate star with the freshman team. More than anything, he showed what he could do one-on-one. He led the freshman team in rushing, scoring and kick returns. He was great in the broken field. We had pretty good slotback in Jeff Hughes, but we knew Rodgers had more talent. He would have been the last guy in the world to redshirt.

John's sophomore season on our first

national championship team was even more than we expected. He was the best sophomore in the country. He scored in every game but one. He caught more than 700 yards in passes and rushed for more than 200 yards. He had nothing but greatness staring him in the face. I couldn't think of anything that would hold him back.

Then it happened. I was attending a Big Eight meeting that spring in Stillwater. Don Bryant and I got called out of a meeting for a telephone call. His secretary was on the line and my secretary was on the other. We both hung up the phone and just looked at each other. The news was out. John had robbed a gas station as a last-day-of-school prank his freshman year. The police had caught some kid doing something and he told them that if they thought that was bad, he'd robbed a gas station the year before with Johnny Rodgers. By that time, everybody had heard of Johnny Rodgers. The police called him in and he confessed right away. He didn't know why he'd done it, but he did. He said he'd thought about giving the \$90 back to the gas station, but didn't know how to go about it.

God, we were talking about armed robbery. I remember all of us thinking it was all over — there was no way he was going to play football again. I pictured him behind bars, not in the end zone. I remember how sorry I felt for him. Life hadn't been easy for John and now it was worse.

Agonizing over the whole Johnny Rodgers situation was the hardest thing I've ever done. I stayed awake nights trying to decide what to do. I knew there was no right answer. If we kept him on the team, people would think we'd do anything just to win. If we kicked him off, we'd be kicking his life



No matter how many times you see it, this punt return for a touchdown against Oklahoma in 1971 still is a thrill for Husker fans.

away. Most people would think justice had prevailed. But what would it do to the only person that really mattered? What would it do to John Rodgers? Every coaching meeting we had, we discussed John. We didn't know how we were going to allow him back on the team.

The trouble was, we were convicting him before the courts were. The public sentiment was definitely against letting him back on the team, but our main concern was trying to do what was right, not what was popular. I think Tom Osborne was the first guy to bring it up. He said if the courts decide to put John on probation, why shouldn't we do the same thing? Yes, John was a football player, but the crime did not occur during football season and it sounded a hell of a lot worse than it was.

We were concerned about due process, so we called the university attorneys in to discuss the situation with them. John had played a whole season after the robbery. He hadn't been in trouble before or since. If the courts were going to treat him as a first-time offender, we felt we had to do the same thing.

The kid who told the police about John was white. If he got off on probation, would we be unduly penalizing John by doing something more punitive and taking away his scholarship? Based on his record, our attorneys felt John might be able to sue the school, if we kicked him off and jeopardized his career. We didn't discuss this with the press, but it was an angle we hadn't thought about. It made the decision even tougher. Nebraska is a very conservative state. Rodgers had been in-

volved in a major crime. He was a kid from the big, bad inner-city of Omaha. Not very many people were on his side.

You could have had the biggest political race, the biggest tax issue or the biggest No. 1 argument in the history of Nebraska. But I don't know if any would have created more conversation in the coffee shops and the bars than John Rodgers did. Everyone in the state had an opinion. Everyone knew he'd done something very wrong. He'd disappointed thousands of young people who idolized him. For them, John probably deserved to be suspended.

But an old phrase kept popping into my mind — two wrongs don't make a right. The University Student Tribunal said it was okay for John to continue school. The court said he was free to pursue normal activities. His crime was against society and he was given the go-ahead in society by the court. His crime was not against the football team and did not affect either his performance or the performance of his teammates.

The court treated John as a citizen, not as a football star. I couldn't help remembering the Johnny Roland case at Missouri. He'd gotten caught stealing some tires, so Missouri suspended him from school for a year. Then they changed their mind and suspended him only one semester, so he played football that next spring. Roland got a second chance and made the most of it. He turned his life around and became a very successful pro with the St. Louis Cardinals.

But John's case was different. The university was not suspending him. Maybe I got to rationalizing. I don't know. This all happened at a time when individual rights were really becoming

important. I don't know if I was mellowing or what. All I knew was my record wasn't perfect. If people hadn't given me a second chance, there was no telling where I'd have been. I thought that if we took football away from John, he might not want to stay in school and if he didn't stay in school, he really wouldn't have a chance. The threat of a lawsuit didn't end up entering into my decision at all. It was just something that was brought up. Finally, I just decided that if everyone else was willing to give John an opportunity to redeem himself, I was willing to do the same thing. I felt that if I deprived him of a chance to play football, I'd be working against the aims of probation already established.

In my mind, John had suffered much more than anyone else under similar circumstances. I realized when you're as well-known as he had become, you lose your right to privacy. When a public figure screws up, the publicity is overwhelming. The way I look at it, that publicity is almost a greater penalty than the law can hand down. After I got back from the Coaches All-America Game in Lubbock that July, I analyzed everything again. I also decided to put John on two years probation. I put the ball in his hands. It was up to him to run with it or fumble it. I've never in my life spent so much time on one thing. But I'm glad I did. I have no regrets. Keeping John on the football team was the right thing to do.

That doesn't mean it was all peaches and cream for John for the rest of the time he was at the university. But he kept himself in line and I give Tom Osborne almost all the credit for that.

Tom was the receivers coach and John was the type who was a little irresponsible about attending a meeting or being where he was supposed to be at the right time. John didn't skip practice, but when he was late, Tom would tell him to meet him at the track at 6 o'clock the next morning. John hated two things; he hated running and he hated to get up in the morning. But if he didn't, Tom just doubled the penalty. So John would be out there and Tom would run with him. One thing about Tom — he kept John on the straight and narrow path while he was playing for us. Tom developed him into a great player and kept him in tow at the same time.

I hate to sound like a lawyer giving a

closing statement 11 years after the fact. I feel like I'm talking in circles. But I'm trying to explain everything that went through my mind during that whole deal with Johnny Rodgers. Through the years, I've run into enough people to know that not everyone buys my logic. They think the only reason I gave John a break was because he was a great player. A lot more went into it than that. But I'm not going to deny that as a coach, it wasn't a pleasant thought to picture a football team without John when you'd already seen what he could do. I don't care what anybody says, every coach in the United States would like to keep his best player on the team. Even the straightest coaches will roll with the punches, if they think they can help an athlete turn his life around and keep them in the win column.

Look at Bear Bryant. Joe Namath gave him fits. Finally, he kicked him off the team one year. Then Joe lived right in the basement of his house. Bear did not give up on Joe. If he would have given up, that would have been it. Joe might not have ever turned things around for himself. Everybody wants to win. Sometimes, it may look like you are bending the rules to accommodate the stars, but it's just a different world. Kids grow up under a lot more pressure these days. There's also a lot more temptation out there. Things don't go easy for everyone. John Rodgers grew up with his brother and sister in a two-room house while his mother barely made ends meet on a welfare check. People can criticize John Rodgers all they want. They can call him a criminal. They can make him their favorite racist joke. But I'd like to see how damn good they'd turn out, growing up in poverty without a father. I wouldn't wish that kind of life on anyone. John still pays publicly for the one big mistake he made. Considering where he came from and the way he had to come up, it's amazing he didn't make a lot more mistakes...

In my mind, Rodgers was the greatest punt return man I've ever seen in college football. You could put together a whole highlight film just on his punt returns. Every time he touched the ball, he was a threat to go all the way. If he got loose from the first guy, you could almost bet on him faking the next two guys out of their scholarships. He made more defensive players mad on punt

returns than anything. They'd talk about him all week, think about him when they lined up...and he'd still burn them. He was so great on punt returns, everyone always seemed to ask me why we never used John on kickoff returns. Very simply, he was not that kind of runner. Kickoff return men put their heads right straight up into the pocket and then make a break. That wasn't Rodgers' style, and we weren't going to change it. We also weren't crazy about watching him get hurt on a kickoff return.

Even I'd get excited when John would stand back there, ready to field a punt. You could sense the anticipation in the stadium and on the bench. You just knew something was going to happen. Even with everyone gunning for him, John had almost 800 yards in punt returns his junior season. He was truly amazing. Part of the reason he was so great was his courage. He'd do everything in his power to avoid getting hit, but he wasn't afraid to take a shot from anybody. He had tremendous durability. He was like a shock absorber out there.

Whenever he'd get hit — no matter how hard it was — he'd bounce right back up and head for the huddle. I know there had to be times when he was biting his lip in pain. But you never heard about it. John Rodgers was as tough as they come. He was a coach's player and a player's player. He had a lot of ability and the guts to go with it.

I remember Bear Bryant talking about Rodgers before the Orange Bowl that year. He'd seen enough film to know that no matter how good your punt coverage was, you still might follow Rodgers into the end zone. Bear tried to get ready for him, but it didn't help. John was really the guy who started the rout against Alabama. We were only ahead 6-0 when Alabama punted on the last play of the first quarter. Rodgers ran it back 77 yards for a touchdown. I think that absolutely demoralized Alabama. They were madder than hell at themselves, and while they worried about what had happened, we scored two more touchdowns in the second quarter. Even a coach who can walk on water has a hard time coming back from a 28-0 halftime score. ●

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Dan Hurley

Season Finally Closes For Eight NU All-Stars

Seniors win four of five games in Swan Songs with elite

By Tom Ash

A lot of snow had fallen on Lincoln by the time Dan Hurley arrived back home. It had been more than a month since he and his Nebraska football teammates had taken the Christmas Eve flight to Miami for the Orange Bowl.

He had crossed the country twice, experienced paradise in the Pacific, sampled another culture in the Orient, played in three games and logged over 170,000 air miles. "I'm pretty worn out," he said.

Teammate Jimmy Williams covered the same territory and tacked on visits to his home in Washington, D.C., and a pro testing camp before returning. He was so exhausted, he said he didn't even want to talk about it. "I just want to work out and rest," he said.

Hurley and Williams left immediately after the Orange Bowl for the Hula Bowl in Honolulu and the Japan Bowl in Tokyo, the jewels on the senior all-star game circuit. They played for the winning West in both games.

Ric Lindquist's travels carried him

nearly as far. He left Miami for San Francisco and a winning effort with the West in the East-West Shrine Bowl, then bypassed the southern detour to Hawaii for a direct flight to Tokyo to rejoin Hurley and Williams.

Defensive tackle Henry Waechter hooked up with Lindquist in the winning effort in San Francisco, but missed out on a second all-star date with defensive backs Rodney Lewis and Sammy Sims in the inaugural Olympia Gold Bowl in San Diego because of a hyperextended elbow. The Lewis-Sims team also won.

The only setback for Nebraska seniors on the circuit was in the Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala., where fullback Phil Bates and safety Jeff Krejci toiled for the North.

"The time difference coming back from Japan was outrageous. Tokyo is 17 hours behind Los Angeles. I had a hard time adjusting," Hurley said. He took a week off to visit his brother in Reno to adjust.

"It was a real privilege to play in those games. They had 22 All-Americans in

the Hula Bowl and some of the best backs in the nation like Marcus Allen (USC's Heisman Trophy winner). But I wouldn't trade our I-backs (Mike Rozier and Roger Craig) for any of them," Hurley said.

"At first, I was nervous with all the big names there. I didn't make any All-America teams. I felt I had to prove myself. But everything worked out real well. There's no doubt now that I can play with those guys," he said.

The Hula Bowl was more intense because participants in such games seek to upgrade their value before the pro draft, "and there were about 100 scouts at every practice in Honolulu," Hurley said. "There were only a couple in Japan. It was real lenient. We only practiced twice, without pads."

The Japanese fans were limited in their knowledge of the American game. "They'll cheer for an incomplete pass over there," he said. But the crowd fully understood a fight that broke out in the second half, and the game "got pretty intense after that."



Jimmy Williams



Ric Lindquist



Rodney Lewis

"There was a lot of pride involved. It was like the pro bowl. We were saying, 'The West is the best' because the West won in San Francisco and Hawaii, and the East didn't like that," Hurley said.

Lindquist said his games were "great experiences because we got to meet guys we had played against. The Big Eight guys hung around together and compared notes about our programs. There's no question we're treated as well at Nebraska as anywhere in the country.

One of the players said he's embarrassed to let people on his campus know he's a football player. That's not so at Nebraska. You're proud to be a player at Nebraska.

"The thing that sticks out about the Shrine Bowl is the purpose of the game. We visited the Shrine hospital, and it was a very touching experience.

"The East was favored and had the big names. Paul Wiggins (Stanford), who was our coach, played in the game 25 years ago, and he told us that we'd have real good memories of it if we won. That's so true."

Under the Olympia Bowl format, Lewis and Sims were drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles coaches while Waechter was scheduled to play for the Raiders staff on the other side. The winning Huskers earned \$2,250 while the Hula and Japan Bowl players received only expenses.

"We only had five defensive backs, so Sammy and I played almost the whole game," Lewis said. "The Eagles staff wanted to beat the Raiders real bad, so it was really intense. I liked it."

Bates was scheduled to start for the North in the Senior Bowl but played sparingly. There were rumors that the Kansas City Chiefs staff, which coached the North, wanted to hide his talents

from other scouts so they could "steal" him in the draft. "I don't know about that," Bates said.

But Krejci said, "I thought Phil was the best back there."

"I'll always remember how intense it was," Krejci said. "A lot of guys were trying to better their stock for the draft, and we were getting paid, too. The Senior Bowl and the Olympia Gold Bowl were the opportunity bowls." ●



Henry Waechter



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Huskers Won Tug Of War

Joe Staub had a tough decision to make, but he made the right one when he came to Nebraska.

By Mike Babcock

Two years ago, Joe Staub was a confused young man trying to decide whether he should stay in southern California or get away and give Nebraska a chance.

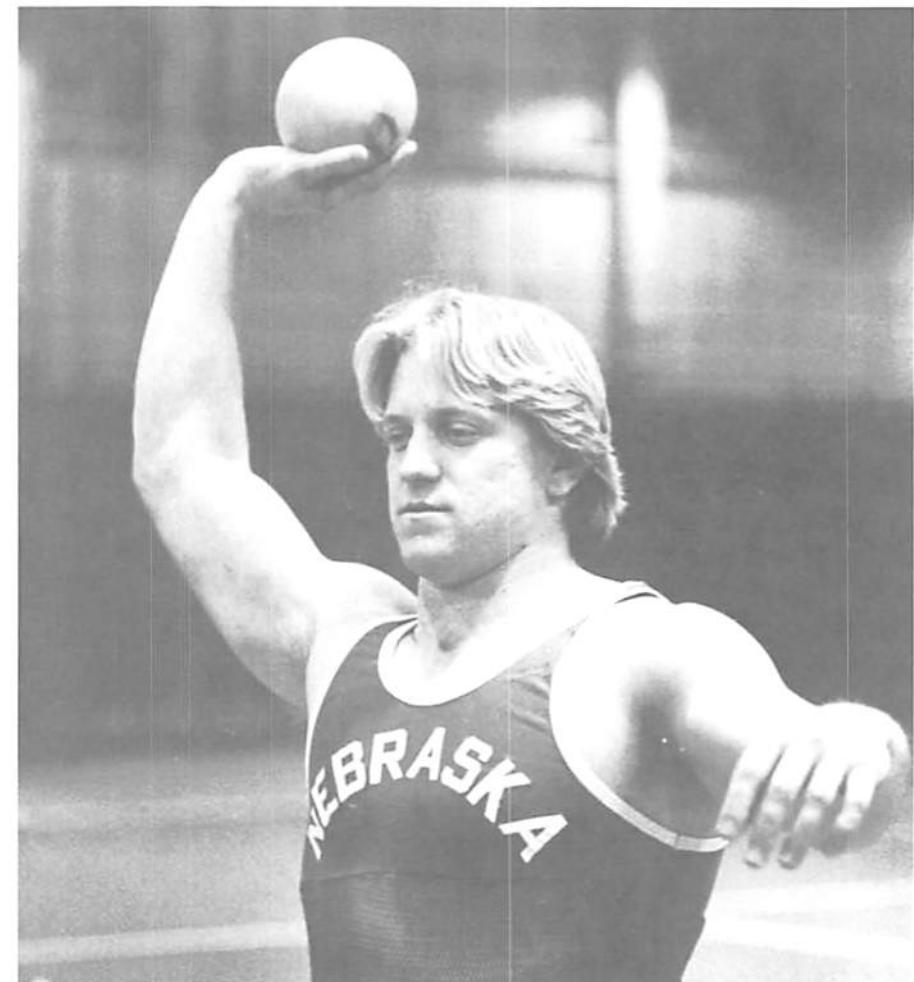
Looking back now, "I wanted to get out of Los Angeles," he says. "You'd think that with the good weather and the beach, California is the place to be. But it all depends on your priorities." Back then, priorities were at the heart of his problems.

Staub was the NCAA Division II shot put champion as a freshman at California State University in Northridge and finished second in the discus at the national meet.

The next season, he attended Glendale Community College where he was the only double winner in the California Community College Championships, taking titles in both the shot put and discus.

Staub was restless. Two colleges in two seasons were evidence of that.

Staub's association with Nebraska



Joe Staub warms up for shot put effort.

began after his year at Glendale CC. Cornhusker Assistant Coach Dick Railsback recruited him, and after much consideration and waiving, Staub decided to transfer to Nebraska, choosing it over Cal State-Northridge, which was aggressively trying to get him back.

That's when the real drama began. To make a long story short, it ended, and began, this way:

Staub signed a national letter of intent to accept scholarship aid from Nebraska; then he changed his mind and called Railsback. "I'm not going to come back there," Staub said.

He thought about "chucking it all and staying in California."

Railsback was persistent, and Staub changed his mind. The phone calls went back and forth, with Cal State-Northridge making its bid for Staub's services, too. Finally, Staub made his decision, called Cal State to say thanks, but no thanks, packed his bags and headed for the airport.

"The coach at Cal State was all upset," said Staub.

According to Staub, the jetliner was loaded when he headed down the boarding ramp with a suitcase full of clothes and a duffle bag containing four shots. "I was the last guy on," he said.

Staub was met on the ramp by a coach from Cal State-Northridge, who was determined to change his mind. The coach said he had Bob Roggy, a world-class javelin thrower, waiting to talk to him (Staub), and plead Cal State's case once more, on a telephone in the lobby. Staub said he wasn't accepting any more calls.

When finesse didn't work, the coach tried force. He grabbed Staub's duffle bag and tried to pull it, and him, back down the ramp. Staub tugged in the other direction. "The shots were getting heavy," he said.

"I'm saying, 'Hey, I'm not going to stay,' and he's saying 'But I've got Bob Roggy on the phone; please just talk to him.' I was despondent, and I was feel-

ing bad enough, vacillating back and forth the way I already had." Staub refused to back out, even though once he was on the plane he wondered, "if I should have stayed."

The dye was cast. At last he had made a decision and he was determined to stick with it.

Now he says: "I'm glad I came."

So are Railsback and Frank Sevigne, Staub's coaches at Nebraska. It didn't take Staub long to become the first shot putter in the school's history to go over 60 feet. In his first season, Staub placed fourth in the NCAA Championships, both indoors and outdoors. Getting him was worth the struggle.

His athletic success at Nebraska didn't eliminate all of Staub's problems of course. He adjusted to the weather, "which is extreme here, but it doesn't bother me. I like variety, and I like fresh air," he said.

Staub could leave the weather in Los Angeles, but he couldn't leave his impulsive nature there. That came along with him on the plane he almost didn't board.

Barely a month after he arrived in Lincoln, Staub found religion through a campus ministry, and his life changed. Staub, who admits "I used to be into drugs and drinking" was born again. Finally he made a commitment without waiving.

Praise the Lord and pass the shot. "My enthusiasm, my whole motivation changed from being self-centered to being on Christ," Staub said. "The Lord is my motivation."

Staub is so strong in his new-found beliefs that he intends to compete for the Athletes in Action in that organization's European ministry when he completes his intercollegiate eligibility.

Despite the enthusiasm which has come with his conversion, Staub still battles life's occasional disappointments. Prior to Nebraska's indoor season, he fought to regain his competitive intensity and his strength after falling off a roof just before fall classes began.

"I slipped and fell, head-first, and woke up on the ground, plastered all over a concrete step," said Staub, whose only injury was a separated left shoulder. The separation may have been a blessing in that his shoulder broke the fall and "saved my head."

Before the fall, Staub was in "good condition," both emotionally and

physically. Afterward, his body weight dropped to between 210 and 215 pounds; his enthusiasm for the shot put dropped even more dramatically, as much out of discouragement as anything else.

At times, he became so discouraged, he'd quit in the middle of a workout. The shoulder would begin to hurt, and he'd walk away. It took him until just before the indoor season began to get back to where he had been before the accident, but in his second major competition of the season, the USA-TFA Indoor Championships in Kansas City, Mo., Staub showed he still had the touch.

Though admittedly a slow starter, Staub put the shot over 60 feet, five times and won the competition. Two weeks later, in a dual meet with Kansas, Staub had six tosses over 60 feet. "The Lord brought me through it," Staub says in retrospect.

"The Lord keeps me motivated, and that's why I want to do my best. I want to do it for the Lord. If it was just for me, I wouldn't compete. That's the conviction I have."

Another of Staub's convictions is that he is not a football player even though at first glance, he might be mistaken for one. It comes from his being a muscular 235 pounds.

Staub admits, "I don't like football," an heretical statement in Nebraska, certainly, but one which Staub immediately qualifies with, "It's fun to watch."

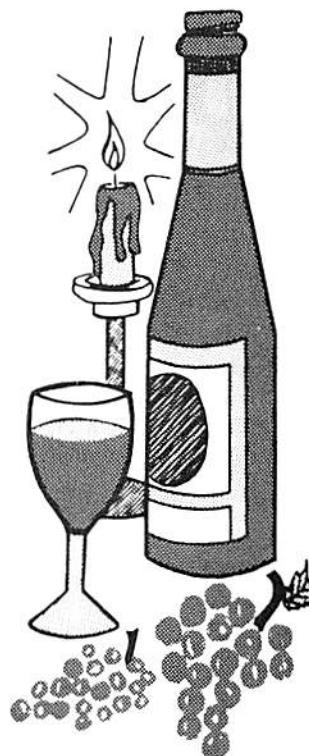
His attitude about football is a result of having played it at Cantwell High School in Los Angeles, where he was a linebacker and tackle. "I got injured too much playing it, and I've had enough of them as it is," Staub said.

For Staub, Nebraska's football program is a reference point, an example of what he'd like the Cornhuskers' track and field program to become. Naturally, he's partial to shot putters. "We've got stud football players here; we should have stud shot putters," said Staub, who has given such a reputation a good start.

"We've got the facilities and the coaching, now we've got to get the reputation," he said.

Two years ago, Staub wouldn't have said that. He wasn't even certain he wanted to come. He was like his duffle bag of shots being pulled in two directions at the same time.

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Divergent Routes Lead to Super Bowl XVI For Former Huskers

Frustration ends for Harper with win; Horn meets his goals, then retires.

The tale of two Huskers in Super Bowl XVI is about as diverse as you can get. Willie Harper took the long, winding road and Rod Horn took the yellow brick road. For Harper, the twice Nebraska All-American defensive end, a ray of sunshine burst through Pontiac's Silverdome after nine years of dog-day afternoons in a San Francisco 49er uniform.

For the first time in his NFL career, Harper started 23 straight games this season. His team won, his heart pounded and he headed to Honolulu to compete in an ABC-TV concoction called "Super Teams."

In just his second year as a pro, Horn also reached the apex. The ex-Husker All-Big Eight defensive tackle didn't start the Super Bowl for the Cincinnati Bengals, but he participated, he alternated and he was educated.

Although the once-in-a-lifetime experience was positive, Horn was ready to move on to the next step of his life. With three dislocated fingers and a dislocated thumb on his left hand and a bruised right shoulder that never really healed all season, Horn deliberated for several days, then walked into the office of Bengal owner Paul Brown to announce his retirement.

One football career punctuated with misery took almost a decade to fly off the launching pad. The other, less conspicuous NFL journey ended almost before it started.

Super Bowl XVI threaded success through both lives. Harper and Horn left Michigan in January happier than two kids with all-day passes to

Disneyland. They both thought they'd been blessed.

"I'm just happy I had the opportunity to be part of it," Harper said. The 49ers' elder statesman is convinced his first truly successful season in San Fran-

cisco coincided with his baptism a few months earlier inside the Christ Temple Apostolic Church in Menlo Park, California.

"People can say what they want about a family of great athletes and



Willie Harper makes the hit on a Colorado back as he displays the talents that led him to all-star status at Nebraska and then to the NFL.

great coaches. But I believe the Lord blessed this team," Harper said. "I believe he blessed me by changing my life. From the beginning of training camp to the last few minutes of the Super Bowl, I could see a difference.

Harper's sense of inner peace was tested early in the season. "We were playing the Rams in the second game in Anaheim," he recalled. "It was late in the fourth quarter and they were driving for a touchdown. Their tight end and I were in the end zone. I turned around, looking for the ball, and he came up under me.

"It should have been offensive pass interference, but they called it on me and gave LA the ball on the one. I got up, steaming. It was a bad call and it looked like it was going to cost us the game because they scored and went ahead of use, 30-24.

"By the time I got back to the sideline, I wasn't upset anymore. I talked to a couple of players. I just said it was in the hands of the Lord, and it would work out for the best. It did, too. It worked out in our behalf. LA scored too soon. We were able to put together a drive and win the game, 31-30."

According to Harper, "there were so many instances like that. I remember the Atlanta game, standing on the sideline, talking about how we needed a miracle. Walt Downing looked at me and said 'Watch the faith. This is going to be a touchdown.' Two seconds later, Joe Montana completed a bomb to Freddie Solomon. Everything seemed to fall into place all season long."

The same could not be said for Horn. Three days into pre-season practice, he was a victim of Coach Forrest Gregg's famous nutcracker, the drill pitting a defensive lineman against an offensive lineman and trying to tackle a back, running between two dummy bags.

Horn received a solid helmet into his right shoulder. "It bruised up, but didn't hurt that much, so I scrimmaged the next day," he said. "I hit the muscle in the exact same place, tackling Eric Hippie in the Detroit game. It atrophied and never really did come around like it should have. I couldn't bench press all season."

He could, however, do his job. Despite the physical problems, Horn alternated at nose guard with five-year NFL veteran Wilson Whitely. Their strength was stopping the run. Both came out of the lineup on obvious passing situations.

Horn also came out of the lineup earlier in the season because of a problem that drew national attention. He had a potassium deficiency which manifested itself in an accelerated heart beat. In order to increase the potassium level in his body, he had to eat bananas in large quantities.

After 10 plays in the fourth game against Buffalo, Horn wound up in the hospital. Excessive heat, humidity and excitement intensified his problem. Horn, who needed a relaxant to calm his heart while playing for the Huskers, worked out the problem by mid-season.

By November, he was contemplating retirement. He had just turned 25. He had bought a small home in Lincoln, purchased 71 acres of land southeast of Lincoln and was anxious to pursue his career goal in natural resources and wildlife management.

Nebraska coaches and teammates who knew Horn, respect his off-the-field dedication almost as much as his on-the-field devotion. An Academic All-Big Eight selection, he became as immersed in his studies as he did lifting weights and studying film.

To Horn, pro football always has

been a means to an end. As much as he loves the sport, his intention never was to build a long, drawn-out career. "Everything considered, the longest I would have gone would have been four years," he said. That figure was sliced in half when everything went perfectly. The No. 3 selection in the third round of the 1980 draft, Horn got some money, invested it, made the team, played, started and reached the Super Bowl.

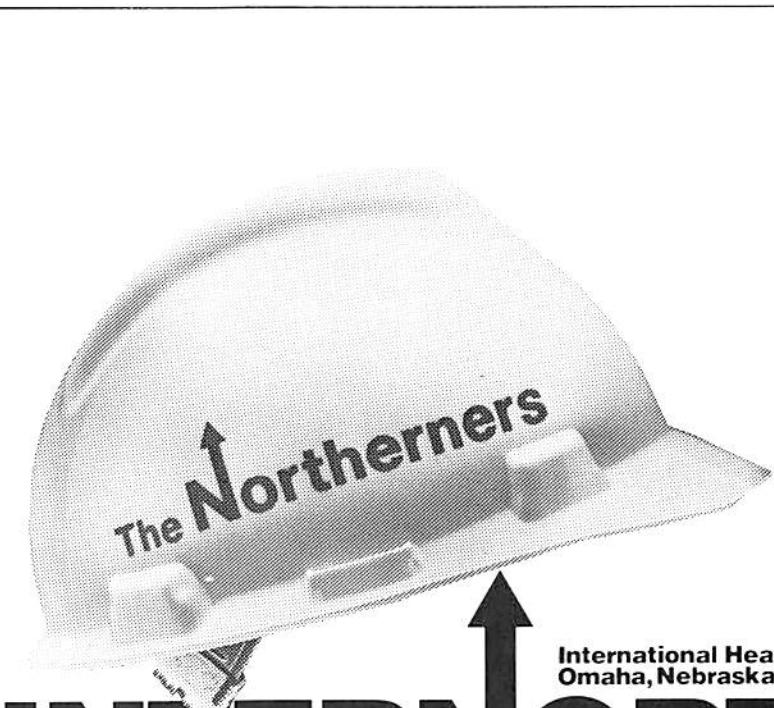
For a young man with high standards, good work habits and virtually no ego, there was little left to accomplish. He didn't care if he was rich, or famous, or all-pro.

So, with no fanfare and no bitterness, he walked into Brown's office like a gentleman, thanked him for the opportunity to be a Bengal, announced his retirement and tiptoed out of the room.

The next morning, Horn packed the belongings from his small, rented home in Reading, Ohio, into his 1974 half-ton Chevy pickup and headed back to Lincoln.

Paul Brown was surprised. He was

CONTINUED ON 61



The Northerners

INTERNORTH

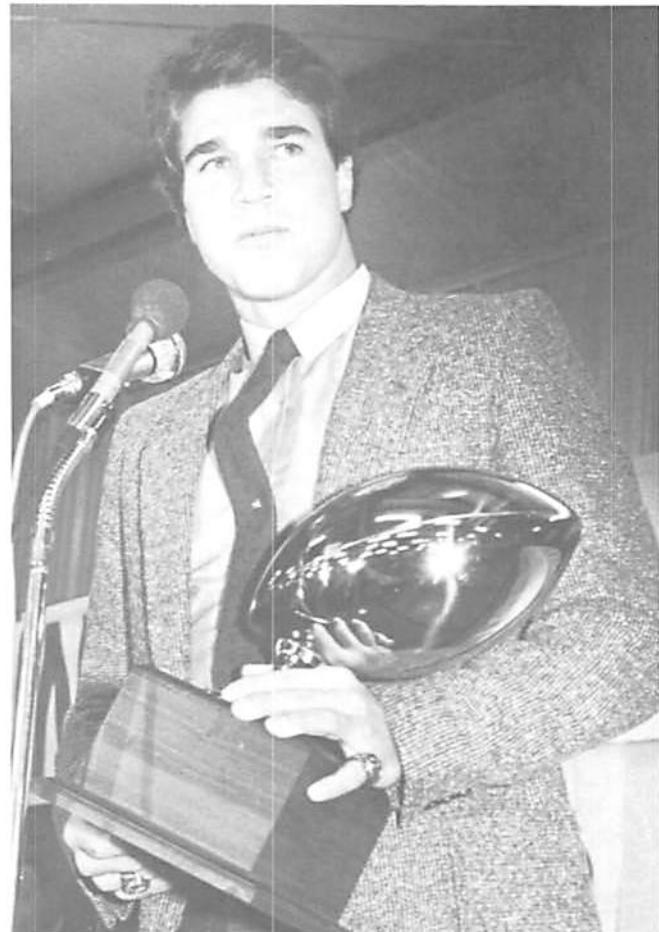
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Mark Mauer displays the Novak Trophy he won as the Huskers' Outstanding Senior during the 1981 season.

Mauer and Steels Pick Sweet Plums

*But Big 8 championship trophy is
'Most Important' presentation.*



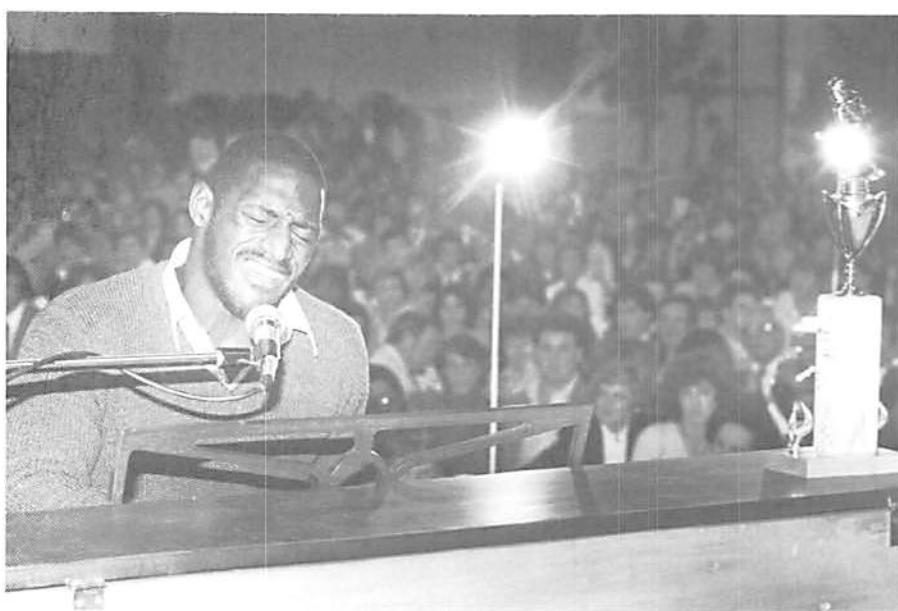
By Tom Ash

Mark Mauer, who was recalled from the quarterback pasture, and Anthony Steels, who walked on from Spain for a marvelous career at wingback, were honored with two of Nebraska's most coveted awards during the Big Eight Championship banquet and awards ceremony.

A turnout of 2,000 jammed Agricultural Hall at the State Fairgrounds on a frigid January evening to salute the champs and bid farewell to the seniors.

Co-captain Mauer, who started and finished the season at quarterback and watched sophomore Turner Gill operate in between, was presented the Tom Novak Trophy as the senior who "best exemplifies courage and determination despite all odds in the manner of Nebraska All-American center, Tom Novak."

Steels picked up the Guy Chamberlin Trophy in memory of the Husker col-



Anthony Steels puts his soul into his music at the awards banquet.



This piano had an all-star moving crew at the NU Awards Banquet as (left to right) Jeff Merrell, Jamie Williams (back to camera), Dave Rimington and Tony Felici get things ready for the Anthony Steels show.

lege and pro Hall of Famer, then entertained the audience with his singing and playing after teammates hoisted a piano onto the stage.

The Huskers were awarded their senior watches and other individual hardware for a productive season, but Big Eight Commissioner Carl James called the championship trophy the "most important" plum "because it's the only team award being given out."

Center Dave Rimington was the most decorated player, receiving the Outland Trophy, Big Eight player of the year, All-American by the AP, UPI, Walter Camp, Kodak, *Football Writers* and *Football News*, All Big Eight by the AP, UPI and *Omaha World-Herald*, Academic All-American and Academic All-Big Eight.

Other honors went to:

Jimmy Williams, DE — Walter Camp, Kodak All-American, Big Eight Defensive player of the year, 2nd team

AP, UPI, *Football News* All-American, AP, UPI, *World-Herald* All Big-Eight.

Dan Hurley, OT — AP, UPI, *World-Herald* All Big-Eight.

Jeff Krejci, DB — AP, UPI, W-H All Big-Eight.

Mike Rozier, IB — AP, UPI, W-H All-Big Eight.

Jamie Williams, TE — AP, UPI, W-H All-Big Eight.

Turner Gill, QB — AP All-Big Eight, 2nd team UPI All-Big Eight, Big Eight offensive player of week vs Colorado.

Sammy Sims, DB — W-H All-Big Eight.

Ric Lindquist, DB — W-H All-Big Eight, 2nd team UPI All-Big Eight, Academic All-American and All-Big Eight.

Steve Damkroger, LB — 2nd team AP, UPI All-Big Eight.

Roger Craig, IB — 2nd team AP, UPI All-Big Eight, Big Eight offensive player of week vs Florida State.

Grant Campbell, P — 2nd team AP, UPI All-Big Eight.

Tony Felici, DE — 2nd team UPI All-Big Eight, Big Eight defensive player of week vs Florida State.

Phil Bates, FB — 2nd team UPI All-Big Eight, All-America Strength Team.

Mike Mandelko, OG — 2nd team AP All-Big Eight.

Randy Theiss, OT — Academic All-American, All-Big Eight, 2nd team AP All-Big Eight.

Henry Waechter, DT — 2nd team AP All-Big Eight.

Scott Woodard, SE — Academic All-Big Eight.

Curt Hineline, MG — Academic All-Big Eight, All-America Strength Team.

Kris Van Norman, DB — Academic All-Big Eight.

Rodney Lewis, DB — All-America Strength Team.

Mark Mauer, QB — Big Eight offensive player of week vs Oklahoma.



Recruits

Mike Hoefer of Norfolk, 6-6 and 210, is the 'sleeper' among line recruits.

CONTINUED FROM 13

"His speed is almost overwhelming for a kid that size. He was the second fastest on his team. He's got everything you're looking for in a defensive lineman."

Kevin Blackmer kept the pipeline open to Minneapolis Central High, following Russell Gary, Rodney Lewis and Roscoe Horn to Nebraska. "I talked to them, and they all said this was the place to come," said Blackmer, who visited Minnesota, UCLA, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Blackmer also is a pitcher with a 20-5 record and .470 batting average.

Fellow Minnesota all-stater Lawrence Hart, Jr., of Park High in Cottage Grove took trips to Alabama, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Iowa State before settling on NU. He was "basically defense oriented," he said, "but we had a need on offense last year, so I played there, too. I'll play any place I can help Nebraska."

Hart made all-state teams on both sides of the line.

Nebraska all-state offensive tackle Brad Johnson was in a 50-50 dilemma between Nebraska and Missouri with a week to go. His decision, he said, came down to a "gut feeling."

The distance his parents would travel to see him play was a factor, but the bottom line was the coaching staffs. "Most of Missouri's coaches came from Nebraska, so I figured what better place to go than where they all learned to coach?" he said.

Todd Carpenter of Grand Island High "will probably get a chance on

offense and defense," Clete Fischer said. "Watching him on film, we could see he was the first guy down the field on special teams, so it looks like he can run. He's vicious at breaking up the wedge."

Mike Hoefer of Norfolk, 6-6 and 210, is the "sleeper" among line recruits. Husker coaches were watching film on a Lincoln Southeast player against Norfolk when graduate assistant Lawrence Cooley said, "Hey, look at this kid play defensive end." Pierce said, "In all the film we watched, we never saw him get knocked off his feet."

Hoefer was not all-state, and Nebraska was the only major school to recruit him. "When Coach Osborne came to visit me, I thought he was going to talk about walking on. When he mentioned a scholarship, it took a while to sink in. I always thought I was too skinny," he said.

Although he was initially recruited by Pettibone, **Phil Rogers**, a 6-3, 235-pound tackle from Ampitheater High in Tucson said the change "didn't bother me. It wasn't even close" among NU, the Arizona schools and Colorado.

Rogers had been oriented in Nebraska lore by his grandfather, Wendell Fisher of Peru, Neb. "I was into Nebraska a long time before I heard from them, but I never thought I'd go there. It was a big day when I got that first letter from Nebraska. Copies of it have been mailed to relatives all over the country."

In the two years that **Tom Welter** played two-way tackle, Yankton, S.D., High lost two games. His teams were state runner-up as a junior and finished the job as a senior.

"He's an outstanding kid, a 4.0 student," said his coach, Max Hawk. "And he's no pansy. He had five older brothers to survive. They all played football. If we've ever had a kid who could play at Nebraska, Tom is the one."

Welter wanted to make his first visit to Nebraska followed by Iowa State, Wyoming and Georgia Tech. Three straight weekends, the Nebraska trip was snowed out. He canceled the others after finally making it to Lincoln.

"I knew where I wanted to go anyway," he said.

Linebackers-Ends

Chad Daffer of Nebraska City and **Tony Holloway** of Bellevue West were Nebraska's all-state linebackers.

The Husker staff was well aware of Daffer's ability from three years in the summer camp. "He's a weight-lifting nut. The thing that caught our attention," Pierce said, "was that he can really hit."

Holloway wasn't on any Nebraska list as a junior, but Linebacker Coach John Melton noticed him first and encouraged other staffers to take a look. "Every coach who saw him came back with an evaluation card that said in big letters: 'He's a hitter,'" Pierce said.

Holloway was "a little surprised" by the Nebraska offer because he missed his last four games after knee surgery. Holloway was a fullback on offense and placed fifth in the state pole vault as a sophomore but hasn't vaulted since.

Brad Tyrer of Kansas City Rockhurst High, son of the late Kansas City Chiefs' all-pro offensive lineman Jim Tyrer, led his team to the state Class 4A title. He made 110 tackles as a defensive end and caught seven passes for 145 yards and two touchdowns as a tight end.

"He's full blast," McBride said. "He played the last three-fourths of the year with a broken wrist. He could only make it for a midweek visit, so I came back and gave up on two other players in the 90 percent range. He's

worth it. He'll be a player. There's no question in my mind."

Defensive Backs

Kevin Biggers, the junior college transfer from Mount Sac, was the first freshman Husker recruiter George Darlington ever encountered to captain a J.C. team. He played two years as a J.C. linebacker but figures as a cornerback at Nebraska. The junior college All-American picked the Huskers because of the "great tradition, a legendary coach and the weight program."

Receivers Coach Gene Huey found **Jimmy Drayton** on a state championship team at Elizabeth, N.J., High. Drayton, a 194-pounder with 4.5 speed, visited Ohio State, Purdue and West Virginia and canceled a trip to Texas. "He's a great player and a very disciplined player," Huey said.

"So many times, inner-city programs have a bad reputation, but recruiting him was one of the most refreshing experiences I've had because of the enthusiasm. It's a class program and Jimmy's a class kid."

Jeff Tomjack of tiny Ewing was all-state in the secondary. He had the fastest clocking in agility drills in Nebraska's summer camp.

As a four-year quarterback, Tomjack accounted for 2,057 yards rushing and 3,501 passing. He rushed for over 1,000 yards as a junior but was limited to 194 as a senior because Coach Mike McCabe wanted to protect an injured knee.

"There's no doubt he can play defensive back, but he just wants a shot at quarterback," McCabe said.

Bryan Siebler, of Fremont, like Tomjack, was a versatile athlete. Siebler made the all-state secondary, but he was one of the top receivers in the state as a sophomore and played running back his last two years.

"His (4.55) speed is legitimate. You see his flat-out speed in track and his agility in basketball. When you see him on the football field, you realize how good he is," Pierce said.

Charlie Cartwright of Olathe, Kan., North was a Kansas all-state defensive back and rushed for over 2,500 yards in two seasons on offense. He is a 3.5 student and chose Nebraska over Kansas and Kansas State after considering the Air Force Academy for its academics. ●

Super Bowlers

CONTINUED FROM 57

also believed that Horn had taken the time to inform him. "He couldn't thank me enough for letting them know before the draft," Horn said. "I think he understood my decision. I had reached the ultimate of the football scene in my second year as a pro. When you start with all the Pop Warner leagues, high schools, colleges, then the pros, you start to realize how lucky you are. A lot of great athletes had been around 10 years and never had this kind of a chance."

Until this season, Harper was one of those athletes. Even though he played on two national championship teams at Nebraska and won two Orange Bowl Defensive Player of the Game awards, his career with the 49ers was laced with broken bones and broken dreams.

A second-round draft choice in 1973, he became a starter at San Francisco in the fourth game of his rookie season and kept that status until the opening game of the '75 season, when a painful strained arch kept him on the sidelines.

Broken ribs in '77 and a knee operation in '78 could not dampen Harper's enthusiasm. "Injuries are part of the game. That's why we wear pads," he said. "I've had my share, but no more than my share. The important thing is to keep coming back."

That's what he did in the Super Bowl. In San Francisco's dramatic 28-27 win over the Dallas Cowboys, Harper strained his left knee and twisted his right ankle. But he was determined to play against Cincinnati because, he said, "the eyes of the world are on us."

At age 31, Willie Harper has never felt better, physically or mentally. He thinks he can play four more years in the pros.

Harper has never forgotten the program that made him. "It's very hard for me to put into words how much Nebraska means to me, how much Nebraska has brought to me," he said. "When I look back and see the way

everything was when I was getting out of high school, it's amazing.

"All through college and through most of my years in the pros, I didn't see all the tie-ins...I didn't see how something beyond me was working in my behalf. Considering my environment, the attitude I had and the problems I was involved with, I probably shouldn't even have ended up in college."

For Harper, times were tough in Toledo, Ohio. Poverty forced him to work half days and attend high school the other half. At 5:30 every morning, Monday through Friday, he worked in a smelly poultry factory, defeathering chickens. Six hours later, he'd be in class.

When that job became unbearable, he got another one. This one was easy — painting rocks and loading flowers in a nursery. The hours, though, weren't any better, 5:30 to 11:30 a.m., five days a week.

"My family really needed the money," said Willie, who faced a difficult decision at age 18. "When I graduated from high school," he recalled, "I got one of the best jobs in town at the A&P warehouse. I was making \$200 a week. In 1969, that was big money. I'd also been accepted as an apprentice draftsman. I didn't know what to do."

Harper visited Kent State, Toledo, Indiana and Nebraska. His high school coach, ex-Husker fullback Bill Thornton, encouraged him to attend Nebraska. Devaney and Mike Corgan recruited him.

"When they offered me a scholarship and I accepted, I never realized how much it would open the door," Harper said. "Because of Nebraska, I'm a professional football player. Because of Nebraska, I'm a successful businessman. And, more than anything, because of Nebraska, I'm a happy family man." ●



Ask Tom Osborne

You gave your players Sunday off after the Missouri game and made the reprieve a weekly habit the rest of the season. This was something new. Why, and did it have a beneficial effect in the breeze through the Big Eight?

"We did it just to get'em off football for a while. They go straight through for 3½ months. We don't work them hard on Sundays, just jog a little and look at films. It's just a mental thing. We felt it was a good move at the time and saw no reason to change on it. We didn't lose any games. Who knows? We might have practiced every Sunday and still won."

In 1978, when you had Rick Berns and I. M. Hipp as I-backs, you experimented with a split backfield during spring practice to get them both into the game at the same time. It didn't work out. Now, with Roger Craig and Mike Rozier rushing for around 1,000 yards each while sharing the position, will there be a similar experiment this spring?

"We have some ideas on that. Right now, I don't know what the answer is. We'll have to see how fullback is and how the younger backs

come along. We're not going to go to split backs. I don't think we would move one of them exclusively to fullback. We're not going to scrub the I-formation. People get so enamored with the idea of getting them into the game at the same time, but Oklahoma has three running backs. Stanley Wilson (fullback) was as productive as our I-backs, but the other two weren't even close. Going through the season without getting an I-back hurt like we did was extraordinary last season."

What are your primary objectives for spring practice?

"We'll try to be sound everywhere. We were hit hardest (by lapsed eligibility) in the secondary. We lost five of our top seven players back there. The only appreciable playing time was by Allen Lyday and Kris Van Norman. Other than that we were pretty well wiped out on the first and second teams. Replacing Jimmy Williams at defensive end will be difficult, but we thought the same thing last year when we lost Derrie Nelson, and Tony Felici came forth. We're thin in the defensive line, but Doug Herrmann and Tom Gdowski have come along. We're a little better

off in the offensive line than usual with Dave Rimington, Randy Theiss and Mike Mandelko back. We only lost two of the top 10 (Dan Hurley and Tom Carlstrom) there. On paper, we could be as good or better every place but in the secondary. A lot will depend on how (quarterbacks) Turner Gill and Nate Mason come back after surgery. The kicking game should be good again."

Nebraska and New Mexico State agreed to switch their football game from Sept. 18 to Sept. 4 this fall, replacing Iowa's game Sept. 11 as the Husker opener. The deal fell through because of a NMS scheduling problem. Why did you want to make the change?

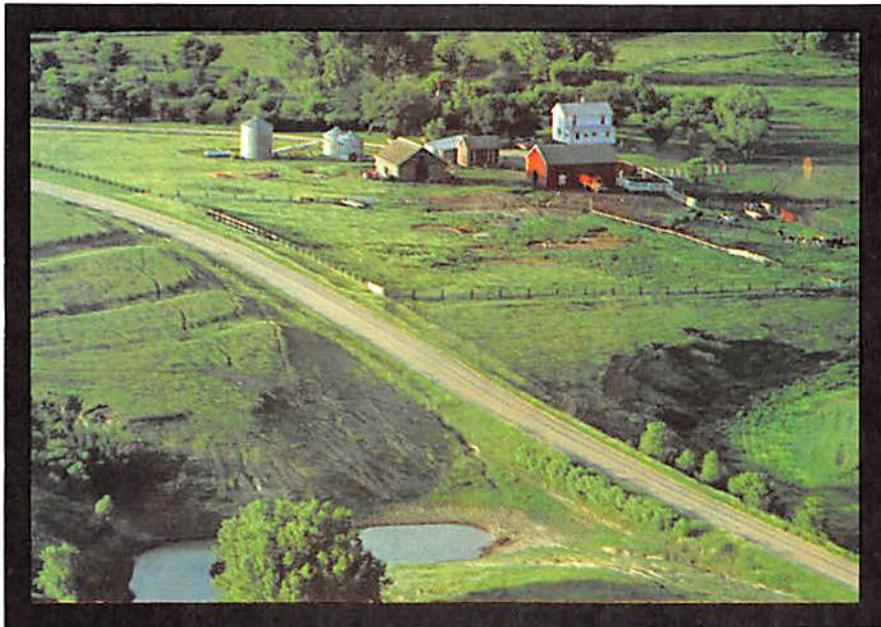
"You'd always like to play the first game against a team where you'd have a chance to play a few more players and ease your way into the season. I'm not saying New Mexico State will be easy, but we'd probably have a little better chance there than opening against Iowa."

"The change also would give us an open date before the Penn State game, which would give us more time to prepare, which is basically what they did against us last year. They moved a game last year to give them an open date before they played us."

"It was just something we thought we'd try to get done if we could. It didn't work out. It's no big problem."



EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have questions for Coach Tom Osborne, write to the *Huskers Illustrated*, Box 83222, Lincoln, NE 68501. We reserve the right to select only those questions we feel appropriate.



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